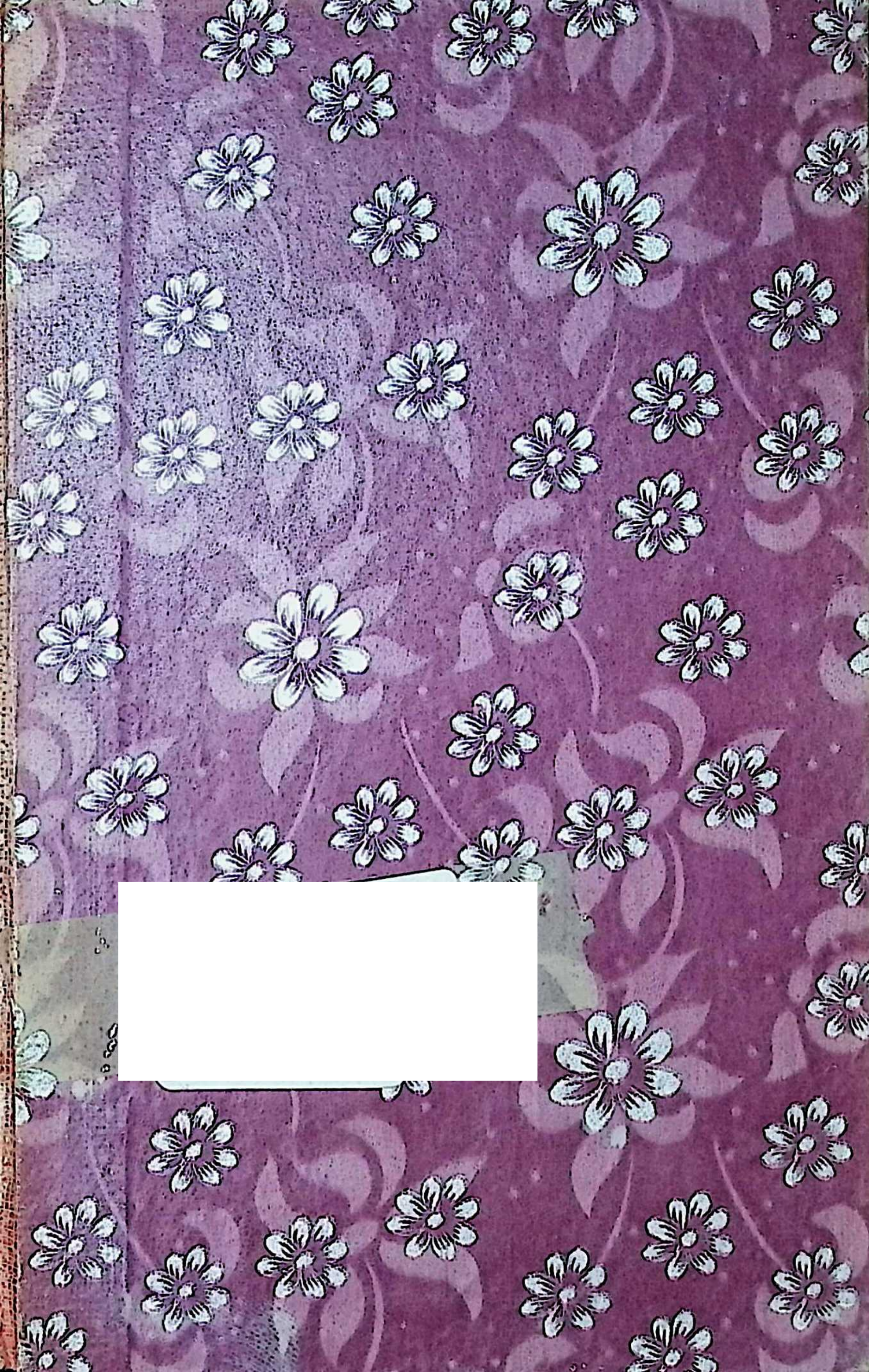

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BY

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முகவுரை

ச்ரிய:பதியான நாராயணன் தான் ஸர்வேச்வரன். அவனே லா தத்துவங்களிலும் மேலான தத்வம். உலகில் கோயில் கொள் வமெல்லாம் தொழநிற்பவன். ஒத்தார் மிக்காரை இலையாய யன். அவனுடைய ஸ்வரூபம் எங்கும் வியாபித்து நிற்கும். நிலவி பொழிவற கரந்த சிலிடந்தொறும் இடந்திகழ் பொருள் தொறும் து எங்கும் பரந்திருக்கும். கண்ணுப் காண வரிதாயிருக்கும். கிகளுக்கு உட்கண்ணுப் காணும்படி இருக்கும். அந்த ஸ்வரு தை திவ்யாத்ம ஸ்வரூபமென்பார்கள். அவனுக்கு நித்யமாய் க்யமாய் எல்லாக்காலத்திலும் அநுபாவ்யமாய் எத்தனை காலம் வித்தாலும் தெவிட்டாததுமான ஒரு திருமேனி உண்டு. அதை மங்கள விக்ரஹம் என்று சொல்வார்கள். அத்திருமேனி ஐந்து கப்படும். ஸ்ரீவைகுண்டத்தில் நித்யஸூரிகளாலும் முக்தியடைந்த ாலும் ஸேவிக்கப்படும் திருமேனி ஒன்று. அதைப் பரரூபமென் ர். அது நம்மால் பார்க்கவரிது.

இரண்டாவது வ்யூஹரூபம். நாமிருக்கும் பிரகிருதிக்குள்ளேயே பாற்கடலில் வாஸுதேவன், ஸங்கர்ஷணன், பிரத்யும்னன், அநி ர் என்று சொல்லப்படும் மூர்த்திகள், நான்காய் கூட்டமிருப்பதால் ம் என்று பெயர் பெற்றிருக்கும். அதுவும் நமக்குக் காண நில ாதது.

ன்றாவது ரூபம். அந்தர்யாமி. எல்லாருடைய உடம்பிலும் ஹ்ருத கட்டைவிரலளவுக்குள்ள ரூபம். நம்மாழ்வார் ‘கண்கள் சிவந்து ாய’’ என்று தொடங்கி “ஒருவன் அடியேனுள்ளான்’’ என்று வித்த ரூபம். அதுவும் யோகிகளுக்கு அல்லாது நமக்கு நிலமல்ல. ாவது ராமகிருஷ்ணாதிகளான ரூபங்கள். அந்த அவதாரகாலங் இருந்தால் அநுபவிக்கலாம். அதற்கு விபவம் எனப் பெயர். நாம் வதாரங்களுக்கும் பிற்பாடராக வந்துள்ளோம். அது நமக்குக் வரிது.

ன்காவது அர்ச்சாவதாரம். அவதாரங்களுக்கும் பின்னானார் கும் சோதி. அவ்வவ்வோ அர்ச்சைகளின் ஞானத்தாலன்றி க நமக்கு வேறு வழியில்லை. “உலகமேத்தும் கண்டியூர் அரங்

கம் மெய்யம் கச்சி பேர் மல்லையென்று மண்டினாருய்யலல்லால் மற்றையார்க்குய்யலாமே" என்றார் கலியனார். அதுவே நமதுப்பிடம். அந்த ரூபமே நமக்கு போக்யம். அர்ச்சா ரூபத்தை மண்டி அநுபவித்தாலன்றி வேறு உய்வதோருபாயமில்லை. அது ஆறு குணங்களாலும் நிறைந்த விக்ரஹம்.

ச்ரிய:பதியான ஸர்வேச்வரன் இந்த அர்ச்சாரூபத்துடன் இப்புவியின்கண் பலக்ஷேத்ரங்களில் நித்யவாஸம் செய்கிறான். அவைகளைத் திருப்பதிகள் என்று சொல்லுவார்கள் அப்பதிகளை யதாபூதவாதிகளான ஆழ்வார்கள் உகந்து பாடுவார்கள். அப்படி ஆழ்வார்களால் பாடப் பெற்ற பதிகளுக்கு ஓர் ஏற்றமுண்டு. அத்திருப்பதிகளுள் திருவயிந்திரபுரம் என்பது தென்னாடும் வடநாடும் தொழநின்ற திருப்பதி. தேவர்தானவர் சென்று சென்று இறைஞ்சும் திருப்பதி. அழகான ஸ்தலம். அடியவர்க்கு மெய்யன் என்ற திருநாமம் பூண்டு பகவான் உகந்து வர்த்திக்குமிடம். கருடநதி என்னும் ஆற்றங்கரையிலுள்ளது. கரையில் ஸர்வேச்வரன் வாஸம் செய்வதால் "கங்காதிகாம் விததீம் கருடஸ்ரவந்தீம்" என்னும்படி அவ்விடத்தில் கங்கையிலும் சிறந்த நதியென்ற புகழ் படைத்தது. ஔஷதாசலம் என்று சொல்லப்படும் மருந்து மலையின் பார்சுவத்தில் மருந்தாயும் மருத்துவனாயும் நிற்கிற அடியவர்க்கு மெய்யன் உகந்து வர்த்திக்கிறான். ஆனது பற்றிப் ப்ரேமாதிசயத்தாலே ஆழ்வார் விசேஷப்ரீதியுடன் அநுபவிக்கிறார். திருமங்கையாழ்வார் இப்பதியை மிகவும் அன்புடன் ஆதரித்துப் பேசுகிறார்.

சில திவ்ய தேசங்களைப் பேசும் போது ராஜகுணப்ரசுரர்களான பல்லவன் சோழன் முதலான அரசர்கள் வணங்கும் பதி என்பர்.

சில திவ்ய தேசங்களை வர்ணாச்ரம தர்மங்களை செவ்வனே அநுஷ்டித்து நித்யநைமித்திக தர்மங்களில் அடங்கிய தேவதாந்தரங்களையும் அவர்களுக்கு அந்தர்யாமி பர்யந்தம் புத்தி பண்ணுமதிகாரிகள் ஆச்ரயிக்கும் திருப்பதிகளாகப்பாடுவார்.

இந்தத் திருப்பதியை மாத்திரம் அவன் தன்னையே நேராக ஆச்ரயிக்குமவர்கள் வணங்கும் பதியாகக் கருதுகிறார். ஸர்வேச்வரன், ஜகத்துக்காக ஒரு ஸமயம் வந்து பிரளயத்தைப் போக்கி நோக்குமாப் போலவும், பரமபதத்தில் நித்யஸூரிகளுக்கு ஸதாதர்சனம் பண்ணும்படி தன்னைக்கொடுத்திருக்குமாப் போலவும், அளவிடமுடியாத தன்னை இவ்வளவு என்று அளவிட்டு அநுபவிக்கும்படி தனக்குள்ளன எல்லாவற்றையும் காட்டிக் கொண்டு நிற்கும் திவ்ய தேசம் என்று பேசுவது நோக்கத்தக்கது.

ஆதலால் அநந்யப் பிரயோஜனரான வதிகாரிகள் ஆச்ரயிக்கும் திருப்பதி என்ற ஏற்றம் திருவயிந்தைக்கேயுள்ளது.

கருட நதியும் மலையும். அருகே சோலைகளும், நீர் நிலங்களும் அழகாக வாய்த்திருக்கும் திருப்பதி. திருமங்கையாழ்வார் அவ்வூரின் இயற்கையழகைப் பேசுகிறார். நீர் நிலங்களில் தாமரைகள் மலர்ந்திருக்கின்றன. வண்டுகள் கூட்டமாகச் சென்று தாமரை மலர்களில ததும்பும் தேனை அருந்துகின்றன. மீண்டும் சாபலாதிசயத்தாலே சோலைகளில் செருந்தியின் மலரில் தேன் வெள்ளத்தைப் பருகச் சென்றன. வெள்ளத்திலே இழியப் பயந்து கரையிலே உலாவுகின்றனவாம். பின்னும் மலையின் அருகே (மாதவிப் பந்தலில்) குருக்கத்திப்பூ நிறைந்த பந்தலில் வண்டுகள் பேடையுடன் தேனருந்தச் சென்றனவாம். நடுவே பிரணய கலகம் வந்து பெண்வண்டு நான் போகிறேன் நீ பிழைத்திருப்பதைப் பார்ப்போம் என்று சொல்லி மாதவிப் பந்தலில் செறியப் பூத்த பூவிலே போய் ஒளிந்துக் கொண்டது. ஆண் வண்டு என்ன ஸமாதானம் சொல்லியும் பேடை இணங்கவில்லை. உடனே பாடப் பகை தீரும் என்ற பழமொழிக்கிணங்க ஆண்வண்டு தாமரை மலரில் சென்று தென்னவென்ற ஆளத்தி வைத்ததும் அது கேட்டுப் பெண் வண்டும் வந்ததாம். “பேதை நெஞ்சறவறப்பாடும் பாட்டை” என்று நம்மாழ்வார் அருளிச் செயல் காண்க.

மலையின் பக்கத்தில் நெருங்கி வளர்ந்த குருக்கத்தி செண்பகத்தைச் சென்று கட்டிக் கொண்டது. முல்லை நிலத்தில் அந்தக் கொடி காற்றிலே அசைந்தாடித்தாம். ஆடவே அதன் காற்றுப் பட்டு மருத நிலத்திலுள்ள தாமரை மலர்ந்ததாம். இங்ஙனம் அயிந்தை நகர் காட்சி அளிக்கிறதென்கிறார். கரும்புகள் வானளாவி வளர்ந்திருக்கின்றன. நெருங்கி வளர்ந்திருக்கின்றன. இராங்கரும்புகள் ஒன்றோடொன்று உறைகின்றன. உறைவதால் சாறு வெள்ளம் கீழே விழுகிறது. அதனால் கீழ் பூமி சேறாய்க் கிடக்குமாம்.

குரங்குகள் பொன் போல் பிரகாசிக்கிற வேங்கை கோங்கு செண்பகக் கொம்பினில் தாவிக் குதித்து வேகத்தோடே வந்து மேலே போகமாட்டாதே தேன் மிக்கிருந்த பலாப்பழத்தை சாப்பிடுகின்றன. அவ்வூரில் மலைகளும் மதில்களும் வானளாவியிருக்கின்றன. சந்திரன் தவழ்ந்து சென்று ஏறும்படி உயரமாயிருக்கின்றனவாம். சுற்றிலும் தேன் பெருகுகிற சோலைகள் தழுவி நிற்கின்றனவாம். இப்படிக் காட்சியளிக்கிறது அயிந்தை நகர்.

நீர் நிலங்களில் தாமரை மலர்கள் விசாலமாக அகலமாக மலர்ந்திருக்கின்றனவாம். அந்தத் தாமரைப் படுக்கையிலே அன்னப்பக்ஷிகள் பெண்பக்ஷிகளோடு இனிதமர்ந்திருக்கின்றன. அருகே சென்னெற் பயிர்கள் நிறைந்த கதிர்களாகிற சாமரத்தை வீசுகின்றனவாம். அன்னங்கள் காற்றைக் கண்டு ஒரு சேதனனோ என்று துணுக்கென்ற வேண்டாதே அமர்ந்திருக்கின்றனவாம். மழை பெய்தால் மலையருவிகள் ஆனைகளின் கொம்புகளையும் அகில் மரத்தையும் முறித்துக் கொண்டு அலைகளாகிற கைகளாலே ஏந்திக் கொண்டு வயல்களிலே புகுகின்றனவாம்.

குளிர்ந்த மலர்ச்சாரிலே வெற்றிலைக் கொடிகள், அருகே பாக்கு மரங்களுடைய இளம்பாளைகள் விரிந்த வாஸனையாலே எருப் போட்டாப் போலிருக்க வெற்றிலைக்கிளைகள் வளர்கின்றன. அருகே ஆறு. அந்த வாஸனையோடு ஆறு ஓட அதில் மீன்கள் பாய்கின்றன. அந்த நதி வயல்களில் பாய்கிறது. அப்படிப்பட்ட திவ்ய தேசம். இப்படி அழகு வாய்ந்த திருப்பதி திருவயிந்தை. அதில் ஸர்வேச்வரன் உறைந்து வர்த்திக்கிறான். அவன் தசாவதாரங்களின் காட்சியையும் அளிக்கிறான்.

மாநிலமேனமதாய் வளை மருப்பினில் அகத்தொடுக்கி கருந்தண் மாகடல் கண்துயின்றவன் மின்னுமாழியங்கையவன். மலர்மகள் உறைதரு திருமார்பன். நான்மறைப்பல் பொருளாகிய பரன். ஆலிலை வைகிய மாயவன். அடியார்க்கு மெய்யன். தெய்வநாயகன். அவுணன் தன் மார்பகம் இருபிளவாக் கூறு கொண்டு அவன் குலமகற்கு அருள் கொடுத்தவன். மாவலி வேள்வியில் செற்றிருந்து அகலிடம் அளந்தவன். ஆயர் பூங்கொடிக்காக இனவிடை பொருதவன். இராமனாய் இளங்கொடியோடு கானுலாவிய கருநிறத்தன். இலங்கை மன்னன் நீண்முடி பொடி செய்தவன். வில்லிறுத்தவன், வரையெடுத்தவன். விசயனுக்காய் மணித்தேர் கோல் கொள் கைத்தலத்தன் என்றெல்லாம் அருள் மாரி அநுபவித்தார்.

அவ்வெம்பெருமானை கலியனுரை குடி கொண்ட கருத்துடையோன் ஐம்பது ச்லோகங்களாலே அநுபவித்தார். அந்த ஸ்தோத்ரம் தான் "தேவநாயக பஞ்சாசத்" எனப்படும்.

இந்நூலில் ஆசார்யர்களுடைய பிரபாவம், பகவானுடைய ஸௌந்தர்யம், சரணாகதியின் தத்துவம், முதலியவை அழகாக வர்ணிக்கப் பட்டிருக்கின்றன. அடியவர்க்கு மெய்யனுடைய திருமேனி அழகு திருமுடி முதல் திருவடி வரையில் பேசப்பட்டிருப்பது மிகவும் நோக்கத் தக்கது. "நின்வடிவழகு மறவாதார் பிறவாதாரே" என்று ஸ்ரீ தேசிகன் பேசியிருப்பதும் காணலாம். இந்நூலின் பொருளை எல்லோரும் எளிதில் அறிய வேண்டி ஆங்கில மொழியில் ஸ்ரீமான் D. ராமஸ்வாமி அய்யங்கார் எழுதியுள்ளார். D. ராமஸ்வாமி ஐயங்கார் ஸ்வாமியை அறியாதாரில்லை. அன்னாருடைய ஆத்மகுணங்களும், அர்ச்சாவதார அநுபவ கிரமமும் அனைத்துலகிலும் அறியப்பட்ட விஷயமே. இந்நூல் எல்லோருக்கும் மிகவும் ஆத்மாவின் க்ஷேமத்திற்கு உபகாரப்படும் என்று நம்புகிறேன். D. R. ஸ்வாமி ஐயங்காரும் இம்மாதிரி பல நூல்கள் எழுதி வெளியிட்டுக் கொண்டு பல்லாண்டுகள் இப்புவியில் விளங்க வேண்டும் என்று அரங்கன் அடிநிலைகளை வணங்குகிறேன்.

ஸ்ரீரங்கநாத திவ்யமணி பாதுகா ஸ்ம்ருதி.

Dedicated

to the revered memory of

Desikadarsana Rathnadeepam

Sriman V. V. Srinivasa

Ayyangar Swami

(1871—1954)

ஸ்ரீ :

FOREWORD

(Sriman C. R. Rajagopalacharya, Advocate, Cuddalore-2)

Out of intense affection for me Sriman D. Ramaswami Iyengar, my acharya, has done me a great honour by directing me to write a foreword for his commentary on Devanayaka Panchasat. I am not a scholar, nor am I well versed in religious literature. I am only an ordinary Bhakta, who has intense faith in Lord Devanatha, Sri Sengamala Thayar, and Swami Desika of Thiruvahindrapuram. Being unable to go against the wishes of such a noble soul, I venture to scribble a few lines about the work.

Every scholar of South India in Sanskrit and Prabandham knows full well that Sriman D. Ramaswami Iyengar is not only an eminent scholar in both the Sanskrit and Tamil Vedas, but an ardent devotee of Lord Varadaraja. It will be very inspiring to any one who stands by his side when he is worshipping in a temple; the way in which he has communion with the Lord and sheds tears when he worships. No one can fail to see his abiding faith when he worships.

Swamy Desika did Tapas in the Oushadhadri Hill in Thiruvahindrapuram after bathing in River Garudanadi. After Garudamanthra upasana, Vainatheya (Garuda) appeared before him and instructed him in Hayagreeva Mantra. It is said that Garuda Panchasat was the first Grantha (work), Hayagriva Stotra next, and Devanayaka Panchasat, the third Grantha that Swami Desika sang while at Thiruvahindrapuram. Though Sri Nigamantha Desika was born and bred up at Thooppul, in Kancheepuram, his life was largely spent at Thiruvahindrapuram.

The first sloka of Devanayaka Panchasat, is an invocation to Lord Devanayaka who is praised by Pasupathi and Vidhi, i.e., Siva and Brahma and the other Devas. After invoking Lord Devanayaka, in the next stanza, he invokes the Guruparamparai to bless his work. Next he invokes Valmiki Bhagavan and Vyasa Bhagavan who have spread the gospel of Saranagati in inimitable verses in their epics, the Ramayanam and the Mahabharatha. The third stanza contains the quintessence of Saranagati. Bhakti, Karma and Gnana yogas do not lead us to the goal in the way Prapatti, which is easy and open to all, does. Invoking the blessings of all the aforesaid, will not be fruitful without resort to Sri (Lakshmi) to recommend us to the Lord. Hence in the fourth stanza, Swami Desika appeals to Sri Devi, to recommend to Sri Devanayaka to accept his 'Child's மழலைச் சொல்". In the fifth stanza, Swami Desika feels that he is also competent to praise Devanayaka, who is the Deva of Devas. The milk of the milk-ocean is drunk by cows, but for that reason, their calves do not live on grass but only drink the same milk. In the same way Swami Desika, a calf, drinks the milk of the ocean of Daya. Since Lord Devanayaka is called Dasa Satyan, Swami Desika says in the seventh stanza that He will justify that title of Daasa Satya by coming to his help. The eighth stanza is said to refer to a personal incident in Swami Desika's life when he left Thiruvahindrapuram and went as far as Pennar river in Nathapet. Lord Devanayaka beckoned to him and drew him to His side in Thiruvahindrapuram. The ninth stanza says that life is like a Kaanal Neer (mirage) while Lord Devanayaka is a deep tank where the fantasies and fancies of life will disappear and good drinking water to quench the thirst is available.

Those who worship Lord Devanayaka at Tiruvahindrapuram become Devas and the Lord there, is therefore Lord of Devas i. e., Devanathan. In that village where Lord Devanayaka is worshipped there is the Oushadagiri and Sesha Theertham to wipe off all our sins.

In the later stanzas Swami Desika describes every anga of His Lord from Kireetam to Thiruvadi in severäl stanzas. The face, the lips, the eyes, the ears and the eardrops all are separately dealt with. The neck is enjoyed as equivalent to Panchajanya. The hands which extend upto the knees are enjoyed in stanza 27. The Abhaya Hastham, the Sangu and Chakkaram, the Thirumarbu (chest) are all described. In the Thirumarbu, Srivatsam and Kausthubham are described. Later the hips, the legs and the Divine feet are all enjoyed in the stanzas. The Divine feet with the nails are extolled in several stanzas. The poet ultimately winds up by saying that those who do prapatti at that Thiruvadi are real Bhagyavans. Prahlada, Gokula. Gajendra, and Pareekshit were all saved when great danger was threatening them, by the Lord in whom they had abiding faith. Swami Desika finally sings that by praising Lord Devanayaka he has become a Satyavaadi.

◆

श्री:

SRI DEVANAYAKA PANCHASAT

OF

VEDANTA DESIKA

श्रीमान् वेङ्कटनाथार्यः कवितार्किक केसरी ।
वेदान्ताचार्यवर्यो मे सन्निधत्तां सदा हृदि ॥

INTRODUCTORY :

Sri Devanayaka Panchasat is a stotra (hymn) in Sanskrit in praise of Lord Devanatha of Tiruvahindrapuram, a village about 3 miles west of Tirupapuliyur, a suburb of Cuddalore in South Arcot District of Tamil Nadu. This is a stotra of 50 slokas (53 to be exact) and hence is known as a Panchasat (50). This is one of the three Panchasats out of the 28 stotras of Vedanta Desika, the other two being *Garuda Panchasat* and *Varadaraja Panchasat*.

Tiruvahindrapuram is a Divya Desa (Paadalsthalam). It has been sung about by Tirumangai Alwar who refers to it as Tiruvayindirapuram (திருவயிந்திரபுரம்). Desika has referred to this Divya Desa under several names both in his Sanskrit works and Tamil works.

Tirumangai Alwar has referred to the Lord of this Divya Desa in his Tirumozhi (III-1) as அடியவர்க்கு மெய்யனாகிய தெய்வநாயகன் in the 3rd Verse of that Tirumozhi. Desika is fascinated by this name or the two names it contains. Adiyavarkku

Meyyan and தெய்வ நாயகன்— as we shall see while enjoying the slokas. In fact a rare feat has been wrought by Desika in this Stotra The first word of the Stora is *Pranata* and the last word *Satyavadi*. Putting them together we get the word Pranata-Satyavadi அடியவர்க்கு மெய்யன். Deftness in poetic and literary skill cannot go further.

According to tradition, this stotra is reckoned as the third out of Desika's numerous works, the first two being Garuda Panchasat and Hayagreeva Stotram. But according to Srimad Ubhaya Ve Bhagavad Vishayam Chetlur Narasimhacharya Swamy, an ardent devotee of Desika and Devanatha, this Devanayaka Panchasat is the very first work of Swamy Desika.

In all, there are nine works of Desika in praise of Devanatha and they are listed in the last verse of the Tamil Prabandham Navamanimaalai in the following order. (1) Devanayaka Panchasat in Sanskrit, (2) Achyuta Satakam in Praakrit, (3) Mummanik-Kovai, (4) Pandu, (பந்து.) (5) Kazhal (கழல), (6) Ammaanai (அம்மானை), (7) Oosal (ஊசல்), (8) Esal (ஏசல) and (9) Navamanimaalai, Nos. 3 to 9 being in Tamil. (Nos. 4 to 8 are not now extant).

The aforesaid last verse of Navamanimaalai in so many terms refers to Lord Devanatha almost having laid a command on Desika to sing His praises on the lines of the Ancient Vedas. (முந்தை மறை மொய்யவழி மொழி நீ). The great fascination for, and the intense devotion towards, Devanatha on the part of Desika are amply visible from the four extant works out of the above nine. In my humble opinion, Devanayaka Panchasat in Sanskrit and Mummanik-Kovai in Tamil easily excel. Verses 3, 6 and 9 of Mummanik-Kovai are couched in Sringara Rasa (eroticism). The seed therefor can be seen in Devanayaka Panchasat as we shall see in due course during the commentary on this Stotra.

I feel it my duty to set down one feature which has puzzled me a great deal. In none of the later 100 and odd works of

Swami Desika is there any reference to Lord Devanatha or this sthala Tiruvahindrapuram, with the solitary exception of Paramata-bhanga, a Rahasya Grantha in Manipravala where there is reference to "Ahindra Nagar" in the beginning and பொன்னயிந்தை நகர் at the end. It is in this Divya Desa that Desika obtained the Grace of Garuda and of Hayagreeva, as a result of the blessings of Lord Devanatha. It is here that he became a fully equipped Acharya. And yet there is no noteworthy reference to it in his later works. The absence of mention especially in Hamsa Sandesa and Sankalpa Suryodaya (Act VIII) where very many Kshetras, Divya Desas and Emberumans are sung about, is incapable of explanation.

Be that as it may, this factor can in no way detract from the high esteem in which Desika held Tiruvahindrapuram or his fervour and devotion to Lord Devanatha, his first love.

We shall now proceed to enjoy the slokas of this magnificent and mellifluous stotra.

SLOKA 1

प्रणत सुर किरीट प्रान्त मन्दारमाला
विगलितमकरन्द स्निग्ध पादारविन्दः ।
पशुपति विधि पूज्यः पद्मपत्रायताक्षः
फणिपतिपुरनाथः पातु मां देवनाथः ॥ (१)

ப்ரணதஸுரகிரீட ப்ராந்த மந்தாரமாலா
விகலிதமகரந்த ஸ்நிக்த பாதாரவிந்த: |
பசுபதி விதி பூஜ்ய: பத்மபத்ராயதாக்ஷ:
பணிபதி புரநாத: பாது மாம் தேவநாத: || (1)

May Lord Devanatha, the Lord of Tiruvahindrapuram, who has broad eyes like lotus petals, protect me,—that Lord who is worshipped by Paramasiva and (the four-faced) Brahma, and whose lotus-like feet are drenched (made wet) by the honey of the flowers in the Mandaara garlands worn on the diadems of Devas prostrating before Him.

This first sloka, as usual, is the Mangala Sloka of the Stotra- and invokes the protective grace of the Lord in praise of whom the stotra is being sung. Incidentally it also shows how and why He is Devanatha, i.e. the Lord of the Devas, celestial beings. All the Devas pay homage to Him by prostrating before Him in such a manner as to touch His Feet with their heads. Those heads wear crest ornaments which are adorned by garlands of mandara flowers. (Mandara is one of the five celestial trees in Indraloka (Indra's paradise; Swarga). As the crest-ornaments touch the Lord's feet, those flowers exude their honey, which it is said bathes the Lord's Feet, which are themselves lotuses with plenty of honey. This is proof that the Lord here is the *naatha* (Lord) of Devas; and hence He is Devanatha.

Not only the denizens of Swargaloka but superior gods like Paramasiva and Brahma, who have their own separate lokas, also worship Him. Special mention is made of this since Indra and other Devas are wont to worship Brahma and Siva also.

All these are because of the Purushottamatva of the Lord which is evident from His Lotus eyes which the Upanishads celebrate as the hall-mark of Parabrahmam, the Supreme Being.

In addition to being a Devanatha, He is also the Lord of Phanipatipura (Aheendrapuram). Phani and ahi mean a serpent or snake. Panipati means chief among serpents-Adisesha. Swami Desika sings in the first verse of Navamanimaalai thus: அடியும் அணையும் எனும் அனந்தன் அடிதொழக் களித்தனை,- an obvious reference to the sthalapurana which speaks about an occasion when Adisesha paid special obeisance to this Lord and brought into existence a special holy Theertham (sacred water-reservoir) known as Sesha Theertham. It is seen even today in the form of a well in the south-eastern corner of the inner praakaara (உள் பிராகாரம்). It is held in great reverence even today. This episode must have have given the sthala the names, Ahindrapuram and Panipatipuram. The name occurs in several later slokas of this stotra.

May that Devanatha protect me—is the prayer voiced in the sloka.

Before I pass on to the next sloka, I desire to point out a peculiarity about the Metre of this sloka. This sloka is couched in Malineevrittam, while the entire stotra–barring the very last two which are again in Malinee— is in the Vasanta Tilaka Metre (also called உத்தர்ஷிணீ or ஸிம்ஹோந்நதா). Desika normally employs Malinee at the end of stotras. Devanayaka Panchasat and Varadaraja Panchasat are the only two stotras in which the first sloka is in Malinee. Probably Desika for these two stotras alone adopted Sri Bhashyakara's way of starting his Sri Bhashya with a sloka in this Metre. (1)

SLOKA 2

देवाधिनाथ कमला पृतनेशपूर्वाम्
दीप्तान्तरां वकुलभूषण नाथ मुख्यैः ।
रामानुज प्रभृतिभिः परिभूषिताग्रां
गोप्त्रीं जगन्ति गुरुपंक्तिमहं प्रपद्ये ॥ (२)

தேவாதிநாத கமலா ப்ருதநேச பூர்வாம்
தீப்தாந்தராம் வகுளபூஷண நாதமுக்யை: |
ராமாநுஜ ப்ரப்ருதிபி: பரிபூஷிதாக்ராம்
கோப்த்ரீம் ஜகந்தி குருபங்க்திமஹம் ப்ரபத்யே ॥ (2)

I take refuge in (pay my obeisance to) the Guruparampara (hierarchy of Acharyas) beginning with Lord Devanatha, Lakshmi and Vishvaksena, having Nammalwar and Nathamunigal etc. chief Acharyas at its shining middle, and with its head (top) adorned by Ramanuja and others, and which is capable of protecting the worlds.

In and by this sloka Desika invokes the protection of the hierarchy of Acharyas for helping him to sing the praises of the Lord properly and adequately. For, it has been laid down that praise and worship of the Lord must be prefaced by worship of the Acharyas, குருவந்தன பூர்வகம். Desika's Gurubhakti is too well known to be dilated upon here. His Guruparampara Saram (Rahasya) and Yatiraja Saptati (stotra) bear ample testimony to the same. It is his conviction that Acharya Bhakti is capable of conferring the highest Sreyas (benefit). That is why this sloka sings in its last paada (quarter) கோப்தரீம் ஜகந்தி குரு பங்க்திம் array of Acharyas protecting the worlds.

The first three quarters of the sloka refer to the beginning middle, and end of the pankti (பங்க்தி or வரிசை). It starts with the Lord Himself. He is the Adi Guru—primordial Acharya. பீதகவாடைப்பிரானார்பிரமகுருவாகிவந்து—Perialwar. Next to Him comes His Consort Lakshmi who is referred to here as Kamala. Having the Lord and Lakshmi as the first and foremost among Acharyas is a peculiar feature of Sri Vaishnava Sampradaya.

Next after Lakshmi comes Vishvaksena, the commander in-chief and Executive Head in Sri Vaikunta. Both the aspects of Senesa are enjoyed by Desika—the Acharyatvam in Daya Satakam and the Executive aspect in Yatiraja Saptati. Sloka 5 of Daya Satakam refers to him as "siksha srotas"- the river of teaching or instruction (siksha connotes punishment also in Tamil- சிக்ஷை). In sloka 3 of Yatiraja Saptati his position as commander is referred to. It is said there that the cosmos is guided by the movement of the cane (or whip), Vetra, in his hand.

Thus the earliest three Acharyas in the hierarchy are dealt with in the first quarter of the sloka. The second quarter refers to the middle portion and mentions Nammalwar (Vakula Bhushana) and Nathamuni (Naatha) by name, and also takes in others (*முக்யை:*) such as Uyyakkondar, Manakkal Nambi, Yaamunacharya (Alavandar) and Peria Nambi (Ramanuja's direct preceptor).

The tip or end is adorned (*பரிபூஷிதாக்ரா*) by Ramanuja and later Acharyas. Kidambi Aaachchan, Engalaalwan, Nadadur Ammal and Appullar (Desika's direct preceptor,.

One can see that the whole sloka is modelled on and is an elaboration of Koorathalwan's famous sloka.

லக்ஷ்மீநாதஸமாரம்பாம்
நாதயாமுநமத்யமாம் |
அஸ்மதாசார்யபர்யந்தாம்
வந்தே குருபரம்பராம் ||

Sriman "Desika Darsana Ratna Deepa" V.V. Srinivasa Iyengar Swamy of revered memory feeling that today no sloka about Guruparampara can afford to omit to refer to Desika by name, adapted the foregoing sloka into the following one:-

ஸ்ரீநிவாஸக்ருபா க்ஷேத்ரம்
ராமநுஜ ஸுமத்யமாம் |
அஸ்மத்தேசிக பாதாப்ஜாம்
வந்தே குருபரம்பராம் ||

making the roopaka (analogy) with a lady more complete.

We shall now enjoy the beauty and the appropriateness of the threefold division in the first three quarters of this sloka of Devanayaka Panchasat.

The three Acharyas referred to in the first quarter are of Vaikunta Loka— not human. There is a gap between them, and the two Acharyas referred to by name in the second quarter, as also between those two Acharyas interse. There is no direct physical contact between Vishvaksena and Nammalwar, nor between Nammalwar and Nathamunigal. Instruction was imparted in both cases through impersonal upadesa and yogic realisation respectively. யோகதசையில் ஸாக்ஷாத்க்ருதரான நம்மாழ்வார் (Guruparampara Saram). From Nathamunigal the Guruparampara has come to us in an unbroken line of succession from Acharya to Sishya down to our own Acharyas. -Alavandar, Ramanuja and Desika being the most outstanding among them. That is why Desika sings about our Darsana as நாதோபஜ்ஞம் ப்ரவ்ருத்தம், பஹுபிருசிதம் யாமுநேயப்ரபந்தை: । த்ராதம் ஸம்யக் யதீந்த்ரை: இதம் அகில தம: கர்சநம் கர்சநம்ந: । (ந: here indicates Desika himself).

The third quarter refers to Ramanuja by name and says that Ramanuja and Acharyas following him are ornaments adorning the Guruparampara at the top. If the middle portion is a shining one, the top is ornamental.

SLOKA 3

दिव्ये दया जलनिधौ दिदिषन्नयन्तुः
तीर्थं निदर्शितवतस्त्रिजगन्निषेव्यम् ।
प्राचः कवीन् निगमसंमित सूनृतोक्तीन्
प्राचेतस प्रभृतिकान् प्रणमाम्यभीक्ष्णम् ॥ (३)

திவ்யே தயா ஜலநிதௌ திவிஷந்நியந்து:
தீர்த்தம் நிதர்சிதவதஸ்த்ரிஜகந்நிஷேவ்யம் |
ப்ராச: கவீந் நிகமஸம்மித ஸூந்ருதோக்தீந்
ப்ராசேதஸ ப்ரப்ருதிகாந் ப்ரணமாம்யபீக்ஷணம்'' || (3)

I repeatedly prostrate before the ancient poets begining with Valmiki who showed (pointed out) the proper place (spot) at which one can get into the huge reservoir (ocean) of the Grace of the Ruler of Devas (Devanatha) and one which all the three worlds can resort to, and whose words (works) are true and pleasant and equal to (similar to) the Vedas.

Having paid his obeisance to the Acharyas in the previous sloka, Desika now pays his respectful pranams to the ancient poets, Valmiki the Adi Kavi, followed by Vyasa, Parasara and others. The invaluable help rendered by those poets is the pointing out of the spot (துறை) (bathing ghat) at which all the three worlds can safely bathe in the ocean of Lord Devanatha's Grace or Daya. The reference obviously is to the path of surrender or Saranagathi which they have spotlighted in their works Ramayana, Mahabharata and Sri Vishnu Purana. This is the only upaya or means which one and all can adopt, Devas, humans and Asuras irrespective of place, creed, colour, caste or sex.

It is further pointed out that their works, while being regarded as equal to the Vedas in sacredness and sanctity, are also true and pleasant.

About Saranagathi itself we will learn in great detail from the later slokas of this stotra.

SLOKA 4

मातस्त्वमम्बुरुहवासिनि किंचिदेतत्
विज्ञाप्यते मयि कुरुष्व तथा प्रसादम् ।
आकर्णयिष्यति यथा विबुधेश्वरस्ते
प्रेयानसौ पृथुकजल्पितवन्मदुक्तिम् ॥ (४).

மாதஸ்த்வமம்புருஹ வாஸிநி கிஞ்சிதேதத்
விஜ்ஞாப்யதே மயி குருஷ்வ ததா ப்ரஸாதம் |
ஆகர்ணயிஷ்யதி யதா விபுதேச்வரஸ்தே
ப்ரேயாநஸௌ ப்ருதுக ஜல்பிதவந் மதுக்திம் ॥ (4)

Mother mine residing in the lotus! I make this small and humble request to Thee. Pray bestow Thy grace on me (by granting it.) Please make this Devanatha, Thy beloved Consort, listen to my words as if they are the prattlings of (His) child.

In and by this sloka a humble prayer is made to Lakshmi, the Consort of the Lord, and She is implored to be pleased to grant it. She is first addressed as Mother (மாத:). Next she is called Amburahavasini – one who resides in a Lotus. The name of the Thayar at this shrine is Hemaabjanayaki ஹேமாப்ஜநாயகி = பொற்றுமரையாள்). These addresses are followed by a humble prayer made to Her beseeching Her to grant it.

The prayer is this. I have begun to sing the praises of your beloved Consort, Devanatha, in and by this stotra. My words, emanating as they do from me who has no qualification to adequately praise the great Lord, are sure to be worthless; and it is but natural that He who has been sung about by Valmiki and Vyasa and their ilk will not even listen to them. You are my mother; the Lord is my father. மாதா தேவி! த்வமஸி, பகவான் வாஸுதேவ: பிதா மே. (Sri Stuti-Sloka 23)

I am thus your and His child. Is it not true that parents love to hear their child's unlearned lispings and prattlings? Your beloved Consort may not have the time nor the patience to listen to my lispings. Fond mother that you are, you can draw your Consort's attention to my faulty and meaningless words. Once make Him listen to my words which are like child's prattle (ப்ருதுக ஜல்பிதவத்). He also will begin to like it. Is He not your beloved? (தே ப்ரேயான்) Will he, can He, refuse to listen even after you commend and recommend my words attempting to praise Him and His glory? Surely not.

The word asau (அஸௌ) qualifying Vibudheswara is very significant, nay eloquent. Asau Vibudheswara— "This Devanayaka" indicates that the Lord and Lakshmi are seated together as Desika sings the Stotra and addresses Thayar. Lord Devanatha and Hemabjanayaki Thayar very frequently give darsan together in Thayar's shrine especially during Navaratri—the period when Desika's annual festival also takes place, except once in 3 or 4 years. Only those who have been privileged to worship during mangalasasanam when Desika offers worship to the Divya Dampati (Divine Consorts) can appreciate the significance and beauty of the occasion.

The spiritual significance of Desika addressing Thayar while the two of Them are together can be fully comprehended only if one recollects when and how Acharya Ramanuja sang the Saranagathi Gadyam. It was on Panguni Uttiram day when Lord Ranganatha and Sri Ranganayaki Thayar were seated together in serthi seva. There also Ramanuja addresses Thayar first and then only the Lord,— after obtaining Her blessing.

So too Desika's prayer is addressed to Thayar first; and it is only from the next sloka that Desika addresses Devanatha. (4)

SLOKA 5

निर्विश्यमान विभवं निगमोत्तमाङ्गैः
स्तोतुं क्षमं मम च देवपते भवन्तं ।
गावः पिबन्तु गणशः कलशाम्बुराशिं
किं तेन तर्णकगणास्तृणमाददानाः ॥ ५ ॥

நிர்விச்யமாந விபவம் நிகமோத்தமாங்கை:
ஸ்தோதும் க்ஷமம் மம ச தேவபதே பவந்தம் |
காவ: பிபந்து கணச: கலசாம்புராசிம்
கிம் தேந தர்ணக கணாஸ்த்ருணமாததாநா; ॥ (5)

Lord of the Devas! Thy glory envisaged by the Upanishads,—I too am capable of praising; when the groups of cows drink the milk of the ocean of milk, are the groups of their young ones (calves) going to feed on grass?

Just as Desika thinks of beginning to praise Devanatha a sense of incompetence creeps over him, and he hesitates, but only for a second. He gets encouraged by the idea that he too is competent to sing the Lord's praise. It may be that His Glory can be, and has been, truly comprehended and adequately praised by the Upanishads which are the crest of the Vedas. To the extent I am capable of, why should I not also attempt to praise that selfsame glory?

The second half of the sloka by a very fine upamana (illustration) shows how the poet came to make up his mind to praise the glory of the Lord. There are herds of cows on the shores adjacent to Ksheerabdhi— the ocean of milk. They all drink the milk of the ocean in plentiful quantities and thrive. By their side there are groups of their calves. Can any one expect those calves to take to feed on grass when there is abundant milk near by? Cows normally feed on grass, and their calves are fed by them with their milk; when those cows themselves feed on milk, are their calves likely to eat grass? To Desika therefore it seems to be a case of கிமுதந்யாயம் (a fortiori). The great Upanishads have indulged in adequate praise of the Lord. I am one nurtured in the Upanishadic culture. So I cannot keep back from singing His praise, any more than the calves leaving the milk and taking to grass. The Cows may drink the ocean's milk in gallons, and the calves only in pints; yet those calves drink only milk. I may not be able to touch even the fringe of the Lord's glory. But that is not going to deter me from attempting to praise. To me all else is trinam (trash) (த்ருணம்=புல் –அல்பம்). Vide ததிராணி த்ருணாய மேநே occuring in the famous sloka beginning with யோநித்யமச்யுத of Koorathalvan about Ramanuja. (5)

SLOKA 6

अज्ञात सीमकमनन्त गरुत्मदाद्यैः
तं त्वा समाधि नियतैरपि सामि दृष्टंम्।
तुष्टूषतो मम मनोरथ सिद्धिदायी
दासेषु सत्य इति धारय नामधेयम् ॥ ६ ॥

அஜ்ஞாத ஸீமகமநந்த கருத்மதாத்யை;
தம் த்வாம் ஸமாதி நியதைரபி ஸாமி த்ருஷ்டம் |
துஷ்டூஷதோ மம மநோரத ஸித்திதாயீ
தாஸேஷு ஸத்ய இதி தாரய நாமதேயம் ॥ (3)

Thy greatness and glory are so immense and infinite that even Adisesha, Garuda and others (Nityasooris) are unable to know their limit or extent: even Bhaktiyoga-nishtas can see only a fraction thereof. I desire to praise such a limitless Thee. Make me realise that desire of mine, and thereby (thereafter) establish (the propriety of) Thy name of Daasa-satya.

A request is made in this sloka to the Lord to justify and establish the name given to Him by Tirumangai Alwar as அடியவர்க்கு மெய்யன் (தாஸேஷுஸத்ய:). Desika has already submitted that he too, however incompetent he may be, is justified in beginning to praise him. But how is he to achieve his desire to praise him without His help? So he prays to the Lord to help him in the matter. The Lord's greatness is limitless and illimitable. Even the Nityasooris around him in Vaikunta, like Adisesha, Garuda, Vishvaksena and others who never had even a tinge of ignorance (avidya) at any time, are unable to fully comprehend His glory. This is not saying anything derogatory to them, For the Lord himself—Sarvagna though He is—does not know His own glory. தனக்கும் தன் தன்மை அறிவரியானை (Peria Tirumozhi 8-4-6) Following the Alwar, Alavandar sings in sloka 2 of his Chatusloki sung in praise of Lakshmi: "யஸ்யாஸ்தே மஹிமாநம் ஆத்மந இவ த்வத்வல்லோபி ப்ரபு: நாலம் மாதும் இயத்தயா" (Your consort the Lord does not know your glory even as He does not know His own). Therefore the inability of the Nitya Sooris to fathom His glory is a compliment to that glory and does no injustice to them.

Equally, those who practise the Bhaktiyoga with eight angas, even when they attain the last stage Samadhi, do not and cannot see that glory in full but only in part ஸாமி. Saami literally means half; here it is used to indicate a fraction.

It is that glory that I desire to praise, pray fulfil my desire and thereby demonstrate to the world that you are really a Daasa-Satya. Am I not your Daasa, humble servant? Pray fulfil my desire and then wear the name and title conferred on you by Tirumangai Alwar when he sings அடியவர்க்கு மெய்யனாகிய தெய்வ நாயகன். The words employed in the last quarter almost border on a covert threat that the Lord stands the risk of the title not befitting Him if He does not fulfil Desika's desire. (6)

SLOKA 7

विश्राणयन् मम विशेषविदामनिन्द्याम्
अन्तर्वर्तीं गिरमहीन्द्रपुराधिराज ।
स्तव्यः स्तवप्रिय इतीव तपोधनोक्तं
स्तोतेति च त्वदभिधानमवन्ध्यय त्वम् ॥ ७ ॥

விச்ராணயந் மம விசேஷவிதாமநிந்த்யாம்
அந்தர்வதீம் கிரமஹீந்த்ர புராதிராஜ |
ஸ்தவ்ய: ஸ்தவப்ரிய இதீவ தபோதநோக்தம்
ஸ்தோதேதி ச த்வதபிதாநமவந்த்யய த்வம் ॥ (7)

Lord of Ahindrapura! That great Sage rich in penance—Vyasa—has sung (about Thee in the Sahasranama) that Thou art fond of praise and that Thou art also the author of praise. Pray make these names of Thine meaningful (truthful) by bestowing on me words pregnant with meaning and significance,—words which will not be found fault with by highly learned people.

To praise the Lord adequately one must be endowed with mati and saraswati, intellect and words in which to couch that praise. Having prayed for the necessary competence in regard to intellect in the previous sloka, the poet now prays for being equipped with giram (வாக்கு), language. This prayer is also couched like the previous one in such a way as to emphasise the compelling necessity for the Lord to grant it. There it was the name given to the Lord by an Alwar that was sought to be justified and made meaningful. Here three names of the Lord in Sage Vyasa's work,— the Sahasranama— which is part of the Mahabharata, are requested to be justified. They are Stavyah (ஸ்தவ்ய:)Stava priyah (ஸ்தவப்ரிய:) and Stota (ஸ்தோதா), Nos. 634, 685 and 638 respectively in the Sahasranamavali. He is eminently fit for being praised; in fact, He is the only praiseworthy One. Hence He is stavyah. He is very fond of praise and therefore a stavapriyah. Thirdly He is himself the praiser ஸ்தோதா in all stotras in His praise. Nammalwar explains this quality of the Lord in the 9th Tiruvoimozhi of the 7th Centum. In 7—9—2 he sings thus: என் சொல்லால் யான் சொன்ன கவியென்பித்துத் தன் சொல்லால் தான் தன்னைக் கீர்த்தித்த மாயன் (Making it appear as if I have praised Him with my words, in truth and fact He has praised Himself with His own words). Sri Parasara Bhattar in his Sahasranama Bhashya goes further and interprets the word Stota as meaning "One who praises those that praise Him". Does not Lord Krishna refer to Gnani as His Atma? ஜ்ஞாநீ து ஆத்மைவ மே மதம். (Gita)

These three names are collectively referred to as த்வதபிதாநம், your appellation or title, not merely name. Relying on the same, I have come forward to praise you in and by this stotra. Pray confer on me the power to employ adequate language in which to sing your praise and in such a manner as to enable me to obtain the approval and approbation of the highly learned ones. If you are pleased to do so, you will certainly be making the words employed by that great sage Vedavyasa—a tapodhana—true and meaningful.

SLOKA 8

संरक्षणीयममराधिपते त्वयैव
दूरं प्रयातमपि दुस्त्यज गाढबन्धम् ।
आकृष्टवानसि भवाननुकम्पमानः
सूत्रानुबद्ध शकुनि क्रमतः स्वयं माम् ॥ ८ ॥

ஸம்ரக்ஷணீயமமராதிபதே த்வயைவ
தூரம் ப்ரயாதமபி துஸ்த்யஜ காடபந்தம் |
ஆக்ருஷ்டவாநஸி பவாநநுகம்பமாந:
ஸூத்ராநுபத்தசகுநிக்ரமத: ஸ்வயம் மாம் || (8)

Lord of the Devas! I am looking to be protected only by Thee, (Thou being my only saviour); I have travelled very far away from Thee, bound, as I was, tightly by samsaric ties, releasing myself from which was impossible for me. But now Thou hast of Thine own accord drawn me unto Thee because of Thy (innate) compassion in the manner of (as if I were) a bird flying far and wide, with a string tied to its feet).

Desika here expresses his feeling of gratitude towards the Lord for having after all found a safe asylum in Him due to His Grace which has drawn him unto Himself. All along for ages on ages, he had been, he says, wandering in places far away from Him, irretrievably bound by his own karma. Now he feels as if he has been drawn towards the Lord who is his only saviour (த்வயைவ ஸம்ரக்ஷணீயம்) and that too due to His anukampa (sympathy). Desika compares himself to a bird let to fly as it pleases anywhere and everywhere, but with a string tied to its feet by means of which it can be drawn by its owner as and when he pleases. "I am the bird", Desika seems to say, and you, my

Lord, are my owner (Swami or Seshi). Your compassion and sympathy towards me and my dire state have acted as the string which has drawn me unto you, out of your free will and pleasure (ஸ்வயம்). (I have done nothing to deserve it).

The Asi (அஸி) in the third line of the sloka seems to be a wrong word. For, Bhavaan (Thou, honorific second person முன்னிலை) is always regarded as a word in the third person (படர்க்கை). So the predicate should also be in the third person. Hence the அஸி, it has been suggested, may be substituted by இதி or நநு.

This sloka has furnished the basis for a traditional story which is as follows:

Desika had obtained the grace of Garuda and Hayagreeva by doing penance on the Hill Oushadaadri situated in front of Lord Devanatha's shrine. Thereafter he came down and lived in Tiruvahindrapuram for sometime worshipping Devanatha and Hemabjavalli. Then he left for Kancheepuram, his birth place, without having sung any stotra or prabandha in Their praise. It is said that after going some distance he felt he was waylaid by Lord Devanatha, who wanted him to come back to Tiruvahindrapuram and sing stotras and prabandhas in His praise and then only leave the place. Desika obeyed His command, came back, and sang the nine works in praise of the Lord, one in Sanskrit, one in Praakrit, and seven in Tamil as already mentioned.

This incident is celebrated even today by a festival in the beginning of the Tamil month of Thai (December) each year in which Lord Devanatha and Swamy Desika are taken to a sandy tract in the River Pennai where they stay for a day and return to the shrine in the night.

That Desika had been commanded by Devanatha to sing in His praise is clear from the following words that occur in the last verse of the ninth work Navamanimalai:

முந்தைமற் மொய்யவழி மொழி நீ என்று
முகுந்தன் அருள்தந்த பயன் பெற்றேன் நானே. (8)

SLOKA 9

व्यामोहिता विविध भोग मरीचिकाभिः
विश्रान्तिमद्य लभते विबुधैकनाथ ।
गम्भीर पूर्णं मधुरं मम धीर्भवन्तं
ग्रीष्मे तटाकमिव शीतमनुप्रविष्टा ॥ ९ ॥

வ்யாமோஹிதா விவித போக மரீசிகாபி:
விச்ராந்திமத்ய லபதே விபுதைகநாத |
கம்பீரபூர்ணமதுரம் மம தீர் பவந்தம்
க்ரீஷ்மே தடாகமிவ சீதமநுப்ரவிஷ்டா ॥ (9)

Devanatha; My intellect which has all along been deluded by the mirage of various and varied sensual pleasures, has now obtained freedom from the fatigue and exhaustion (caused by samsaric ills). For, it has now taken a plunge (entered) into Thee, like one scorched by (the) summer (heat) plunging into the cool waters of a deep tank full of water, which is sweet.

The Lord's gracious act of drawing the poet unto himself was sung about in the previous sloka. Here in this sloka he refers to the immense relief his soul has obtained thereby. "I was aimlessly roaming about in the desert of samsara, including swarga etc. worlds, and also Kaivalya, and I sought to quench my thirst and fatigue by the mirage (apparitions of water in the distance caused by refraction of layers of air) of diverse sense-pleasures. Now that I have been drawn by you unto yourself. I feel refreshed and redeemed. I feel not only as if I have been drawn *unto* you, but also that I have entered *into* you who are like a tank full of sweet and cool water capable of dispelling the taapa (heat) of the scorching summer of samsara."

In comparing the Lord to a tank, Desika is echoing a sentiment voiced by the Alwars: கண் கை கால் தூய செய்ய மலர்களா, சோதிச் செவ்வாய் முகிழதா, சாயல் சாமத் திருமேனித்தண் பாசடையா, தாமரை நீள்வாசத்தடம்போல் வருவானே (திருவாய்மொழி 8—5—1)—Nammalwar.

பொற்றாமரைக்கயம் நீராடப்போனாள்—(திருநெடுந்தாண்டகம்-19)

Vide also sloka 9 of Mukundamala beginning with the words "கர சரணஸரோஜே" where the Lord is depicted as a Hari-saras. Desika's own sloka 43 of Daya Satakam may also be enjoyed in this context.

The epithets used for the Tank (தடாகம்) in this sloka of Devanayaka Panchasat are (1) கம்பீர-deep, (2) பூர்ண-full (3) மதுரம்-Sweet and (4) சீதம்-Cool. The Lord is also கம்பீர-Majestic, difficult to understand, பூர்ண-full (full of all auspicious qualities) மதுரம்-Sweet to contemplate and enjoy, and சீத-cool and refreshing.

Plunging into the Lord (பவந்தம் அநுப்ரவிஷ்டா) the poet feels and enjoys all these delectable qualities of His and feels refreshed in body and soul.

The word धीः is of feminine gender. Desika's intellect is therefore to be taken as a lady enjoying the Lord. Eroticism is creeping into the soul of a Vedantacharya reputed for his virakti ஞானவைராக்யபூஷணம்.

In place of Poorna some editions give the word Punya meaning sacred, pure dispelling sins as in புண்ணியதீர்த்தம்); also lovely to look at (as in புண்யதர்சந:). This word also applies as much to the Lord as to the Tank. (9)

SLOKA 10

दिव्ये पदे जलनिधौ निगमोत्तमाङ्गे
स्वान्ते सतां सवितृ मण्डल मध्यभागे ।
ब्रह्माचले च वहुमानपदे मुनीनां
व्यक्तिं तव त्रिदशनाथ वदन्ति नित्याम् ॥ १० ॥

திவ்யேபதே ஜலநிதௌ நிகமோத்தமாங்கே
ஸ்வாந்தேஸதாம் ஸவித்ரு மண்டலமத்யபாகே |
ப்ரும்மாசலே ச பஹுமாநபதே முநீநாம்
வ்யக்திம் தவ த்ரிதசநாத வதந்தி நித்யாம் ॥ (10)

Devanatha! (The learned ones) say that Thy Forms in Sri Vaikunta, Ksheerabdhi, the crest of the Vedas, the hearts of Sadhus (ஸத்துக்கள்) the centre of Suryamandala and (here) in Brahmaachala (Tiruvahindrapuram) esteemed and revered by Munis, are all eternal.

After the nine slokas which may be regarded as the prefatory part of the stotra, Desika switches on to singing the various glories of the Lord. First and foremost this being a stotra in praise of an Archa (Icon) form of the Lord, he seeks to establish the eternality and permanence of that Form (body) as on a par with all other Forms of His. In Vaikuntaloka there is the Para (பர) form. In Ksheerabdhi it is Vyuha (வ்யூஹ) form. In the hearts of Yogis, He is in the Antaryami form; in Tiruvahindrapuram, he has assumed the Archa (Idol, Image, Icon) form. In addition to these, He shines on the crest of the Vedas (Upanishads) and in the centre of Suryamandala. In all these places, he shines with an eternal and resplendent Form i. e. with a shining Body. (Vibhavatara forms like those of Rama and Krishna are left out because obviously they are not eternal).

The sthalapurana probably gives Brahmaachala as one of the several names of this Kshetra. It is here described as முநீநாம் பஹுமான பதம் a place looked upon with great regard and esteem by sages. The Archa Form of Devanatha is as eternal as the other forms referred to in the sloka. (10)

SLOKA 11

तीर्थैर्वृतं वृजिन दुर्गति नाशनार्हैः
शेष क्षमाविहगराज विरिञ्च जुष्टैः ।
नाथ त्वया नतजनस्य भवौषधेन
प्रख्यातमौषधगिरिं प्रणमन्ति देवाः ॥ ११ ॥

தீர்த்தைர்வ்ருதம் வ்ருஜிநதுர்கதி நாசநார்ஹை:
சேஷக்ஷமா விஹகராஜ விரிஞ்ச ஜுஷ்டை: |
நாத த்வயா நதஜநஸ்ய பவௌஷதேந
ப்ரக்யாதமௌஷத கிரிம் ப்ரணமந்தி தேவா: ॥ (11)

Lord! The Devas pay obeisance to the Oushadadri Hill girt (surrounded) by sacred waters (தீர்த்தங்கள்) capable of dispelling sin and misfortune (of those who bathe in them) and being connected with (resorted to by) Adisesha, Bhoomidevi, Garuda and Brahma respectively and (above all) rendered famous by Thee who art a supreme medicine for the samsaric ills that beset those who prostrate before (i. e. worship) Thee.

After praising the sthala, the poet praises the Hill that prominently adorns it. Its name is Oushadadri, the medicine Hill. It is surrounded by several punyatheerthas (sacred and sanctifying waters). Four of them are mentioned in this sloka. Sesha Theertha (already referred to while commenting on Sloka 1), Bhoomi-theertha, Garudanadi (River flowing to the west of the shrine of Devanatha) and Brahma Theertha. The origin and sacredness of each one of them are separately dealt with in the sthala purana of the Kshetra). Each one of them is capable of dispelling the sins and poverty and other misfortunes of those who bathe in its holy waters.

The second half of the sloka tells us how the Hill is really a medicine Hill. The Lord is Himself a medicine ஔஷதம். In the Sahasranama there are two names (Nos. 288 and 585 in the Namavali) which are ஔஷதம் and பேஷஜம் respectively. Both of them have been taken to mean that the Lord is the medicine for curing mankind and rescuing them from the disease known as Samsara. Desika therefore refers here to Lord Devanatha Himself being a bhavaushadam (பவௌஷதம்) to natajanaas (நதஜநா) those people who bow and bend before Him in all humility, and pray for succour. By contact with the Medicine Supreme, the Hill has become noted and famous as Oushadadri. The Lord is said to have given name and fame as Oushadadri to the Hill த்வயா ப்ரக்யாதம்.

In the Mummanikkovai Prabandha, Desika sings "வெற்புடன் ஒன்றி அயிந்தையில் வெவ்வினை தீர்மருந்தொன்று அமர்ந்தமை."

"The Lord is depicted here as a மருந்து or medicine adjunct to the Hill. Peyalwar had already sung தேங்கோத வண்ணன் வருநரகம் தீர்க்கும் மருந்து (மூன்ரும் திருவந்தாதி—3 Payalwar.) (11)

SLOKA 12

स्वाधीन विश्वविभवं भगवन् विशेषात्
त्वां देवनायकमुशन्ति परावरज्ञाः।
प्रायः प्रदर्शयितुमेतदिति प्रतीमः
त्वद्भक्ति भूषित धियामिह देवभावम् ॥ १२ ॥

ஸ்வாதீந விச்வ விபவம் பகவந் விசேஷாத்
த்வாம் தேவநாயகமுசந்தி பராவரஜ்ஞா: |
ப்ராய: ப்ரதர்சயிதுமேததிதி ப்ரதீம:
த்வத்பக்தி பூஷித தியாமிஹ தேவபாவம் || (12)

Bhagavan (பகவந் !)! Thou hast the entire cosmos under Thy sway. Yet the wise ones (who know what is supreme and what is low) specially speak of Thee as Devanatha. We presume that their referring to Thee so i. e. as the Lord of Devas is mostly (mainly) because Thou doth confer on those whose intellect is embellished here (in this kshetra) with devotion to Thee, the state and status of Devas.

The Lord is the Lord of the entire Viswam (cosmos) or Universe). And yet the knowing ones refer to the Lord presiding over Tiruvahindrapuram as Devanatha as if He were the Lord of the Devas alone. An explanation is offered by Desika therefor in this sloka. Those who worship Him here in Tiruvahindrapuram become Devas or celestials even while they are here. The Devotees are referred to as possessing intellect adorned by devotion, reminding us of Bhaktiroopaapanna gnana which is referred as மதிநலம் by Nammalwar in the opening verse of his Tiruvoimozhi, and by Sri Bhashyakara as "ஷேமுஷீ பக்தி ரூபா semushee Bhaktiroopa" in the first (Mangala) sloka of Sri Bhashya. This is a sine qua non for all mumukshus (aspirants for Moksha) according to Visishtadwaita Siddhanta. As the Devotees of Devanatha possess this Bhaktiroopaapanna Gnana they attain Deva-bhaavam here itself-Bhoosurars (பூஸுரர்கள்) Sumanaso Bhaumaah (ஸுமநஸோ பௌமா:) Denizens of Bhooloka.

The words praayah (ப்ராய:) and prateemah (ப்ரதீம:) suggest that this is an ullekha or poetic fancy of the poet.

Not only is an explanation suggested in and by this sloka for the Lord of this place being known as Devanatha, but the maahaatmyam or glory of the sthala is thereby emphasised once again; of course in an entirely different manner. (12)

Sloka 13

तत्त्वानि यानि चिदचित्प्रविभागवन्ति
त्रय्यन्त वृद्ध गणितानि सिता सितानि ।
दीव्यन्ति तान्यहिपुरन्दरधामनाथ !
दिव्यास्त्र भूषणतया तव विग्रहेऽस्मिन् ॥ १३ ॥

தத்வாநி யாநி சிதசித்ப்ரவிபாகவந்தி
த்ரய்யந்த வ்ருத்தகணிதாநி ஸிதாஸிதாநி |
தீவ்யந்தி தாந்யஹிபுரந்தர தாமநாத
திவ்யாஸ்த்ர பூஷணதயா தவ விக்ரஹேஸ்மிந் ॥ 13

Lord of the City of Tiruvahindrapuram! The several Tattwas self-effulgent and not-self-effulgent that have been classified by elders steeped in Vedic lore as being of the categories chit and achit, all of them shine in this (Archa) Tirumeni (Body) as brilliant weapons and jewels.

According to Visishtadwaita Siddhanta the tattwas are 24 in number, - the jiva (individual soul) being the 25th. Iswara the Supreme Lord is 26th. This sloka refers to the 25 tattwas (inclusive of Jeevatma) being part of 26th Iswara Tattva as can be seen from their lying embedded as weapons or jewels on the celestial Body (Tirumeni) of the Supreme Lord. Only the 25th is self-effulgent. Others are not so; Prakriti or matter. Tattwas have therefore been divided into two classes, Chetana and achetana by elders who have mastered the Vedas.

All of them shine in the celestial Body of the Lord, some in the form of weapons and others as jewels, This has been stated in detail in the Astra-Bhooshana chapters in Sri Vishnu Purana, and very crisply summarised in a Tamil verse which find as place in the Tattwa traya Chintanaadhikaram of Srimad Rahasya trayasara (verse 41 of Adhikara Sangraha Prabandha) which may usefully be referred to here. (புருடன் மணிவரமாக) . . . .

In the Archa form of Lord Devanatha, Desika sees and enjoys the weapons and jewels as symbolising the various tattwas and gives expression to that enjoyment. Note the words தவ அஸ்மிந் விக்ரஹே—in this Body of yours. (13)

SLOKA 14

भूषायुधैरधिगतं निजकान्ति हेतोः
भुक्तं प्रियाभिरनिमेषविलोचनाभिः
प्रत्यङ्ग पूर्णं सुषमा सुभगं वपुस्ते
दृष्ट्वा दृशौ विबुधनाथ न तृप्यतो मे ॥ १४

பூஷாயுதைரதிகதம் நிஜகாந்திஹேதோ :
புக்தம் ப்ரியாபிரநிமேஷ விலோசநாபி : |
ப்ரத்யங்க பூர்ண ஸுஷமா ஸுபகம் வபுஸ்தே
த்ருஷ்ட்வா த்ருசௌ விபுதநாத நத்ருப்யதோ மே ॥ (14)

Devanatha! My eyes which gaze on Thy Body beautified by the full effulgence of every anga (part) of Thy Body, which (Body) has been resorted to by jewels and weapons for obtaining lustre for themselves, which is enjoyed by Thy beloved Consorts with unwinking eyes, those eyes of mine fail to obtain full satisfaction.

Desika's great fascination for the beauty of Devanatha can be seen from this sloka. நின்வடிவழகு மறவாதார் பிறவாதாரே Navamanimalai (6) expresses his conviction in regard to rhe Lord's Beauty of Form. He says here that his eyes which gaze eagerly on the Lord's beautiful Body (ஸுபகம் வபு:) do not get satisfied. They want to look and look at that reservoir of beauty, and the longer they look the desire to look again and again overtakes them. Each Anga (limb or member) of that Body is full of lustrous splendour. It is difficult to pass on from one anga to another since each rivets the eyes on itself. தோள் கண்டார் தோளே கண்டார், தொடு கழல் கமல மன்ன தாள் கண்டார்

தாளே கண்டார், தடக்கை கண்டாருமஃதே, is Kamban's way of expressing this idea. Appayya Deekshitar, famous poet-philosopher, was a great devotee of Varadaraja Perumal of Kanchi and admirer of Desika. The last sloka of his Varadaraja Stavam" ஆபாதம் ஆசிகுரபாரம் அசேஷமங்கம் ஆநந்த ப்ருந்த லஸிதம் ஸுத்ருசாம ஸீமம்...must have been inspired by this sloka of Desika. Only those eyes which fail to be satisfied however long they may look at the Lord's beauty, can be called ஸுத்ருசா.: Desika's eyes are such eyes which never get satiated by gazing on the Lord's beauty in love and admiration. Of course ஸுத்ருசா: can be taken to mean the Vedas or ladies.

The first half of the sloka deals with the beauty of Devanatha in two ways. One is that the jewels and weapons (mentioned in the previous sloka) have come to Devanatha's vigraha in order to obtain beauty and lustre for themselves—not to adorn the Vigraha, as some ignorant people are apt to think. King Dasaratha was one such ignorant person. He bemoaned that the angas of Rama had been deprived of beauty when Rama went to the forest without jewels. (கலனணியாது அங்கங்கள் அழகு மாறி as per Kulasekara Alwar (Perumal Tirumozhi 9-7). But that great Devotee Hanuman exclaims ஸர்வ பூஷண பூஷார்ஹா: கிமர்த்தம் நவிபூஷிதா:. Why are these long sturdy and lovely arms not bedecked by jewels-arms that are fit to adorn all the jewels in the world (not merely arms that are fit to be adorned by all jewels as interpreted by some. One of the birudams (titles) of Lord Sri Ranganatha of Srirangam which the Arayars often give expression to is ஆபரணத்துக்கு அழகு கொடுக்கும் பெருமாள். Kamban gives expression to this sentiment in another way. While referring to Sita Devi being adorned with jewels for Her wedding with Sri Rama, he sings "உமிழ்ச் சுடர்க் கலன்கள் நங்கையழகினை மறைப்பதோரார் (Balakandam Kolangaan Padalam-3). Poor folks (who adorned Sita with ornaments)! They did not realise that thereby they were covering the natural beauty of Sita Devi.

The second line of the sloka refers to another feature which underlines the beauty of Devanatha's Vigraha. It is said that the beautiful Vigraha is being enjoyed by His Consorts with unwinking eyes. This line echoes the sentiment expressed by Alavandar in Sloka 38 of his Stotra Ratna ஸதாநுபூதயாபி அபூர்வவத் விஸ்மயமாததாநயா and in Sloka 44 thereof க்ஷணாணுவத் க்ஷிப்தபராதி காலயா-ப்ரஹர்ஷயந்தம் மஹிஷீம். Though the Consorts enjoy Him and His beauty eternally, they wonder at the same as if they are seeing it for the first time. They are hus gladdened for all time. Koorathalwan in sloka 100 of his Varadaraja Stava refers to Lakshmi enjoying the Lord with ever fresh rasa as if She has just come to set eyes on Him.

Desika adds to these ideas one salient point i. e. that the Consorts enjoy Him with unwinking eyes. Even then they do not get satiated with the enjoyment they derive. We can remind ourselves here with the sentiment expressed by the Gopis in the Gopika Geetam to the effect that Brahma the creator is a jada-dull person, as he has provided eyelids for the eyes which frequently wink and bar sight, thereby preventing them from having uninterrupted vision of Sri Krishna's lovely face surrounded by curly hair. குடிலகுந்தளம் ஸ்ரீமுகம்சதே ஜட உதீக்ஷதரம் பக்ஷ்ம க்ருத்த்ருசாம்.

The Consorts of Devanatha bestowed as they are with unwinking eyes enjoy the beauty of His Vigraha without impediment. This sentiment suggests that Desika also desires to be blessed with un-winking eyes, the better to enjoy Lord Devanatha's beauty. He openly gives expression to this feeling in Sloka 48 of Varadaraja Panchasat—

அநவதிகவிபூதிம் ஹஸ்திசைலேச்வரம் த்வாம்
அநுதிநமநிமேஷைர் லோசநை: நிர்விசேயம்
and follows it up by singing in the next Sloka

நிரந்தரம் நிர்விசத ஸ்த்வதீயம்
அஸ்ப்ருஷ்டசிந்தாபதம் ஆபிருப்யம் |
ஸத்யம் சபே வாரண சைல நாத
வைகுண்ட வாஸேபி ந மேபிலாஷ: ||

That is the extent of Desika's craze for enjoying the beauty of Archavatara. (14

SLOKA 15

वेवेषु निर्जरपते निखिलेष्वधीतं
व्यासादिभिर्बहुमतं तव सूक्तमग्र्यम् ।
कङ्गान्यमूनि भवतः सुभगान्यधीते
विश्वं विभो जनितवन्ति विरिञ्चपूर्वम् ॥   ॥ १५ ॥

வேதேஷு நிர்ஜரபதே நிகிலேஷ்வதீதம்
வ்யாஸாதிபிர் பஹுமதம் தவ ஸூக்த மக்ர்யம் |
அங்காந்யமூநி பவத: ஸுபகாந்யதீதே
விச்வம் விபோ ஜநிதவந்தி விரிஞ்ச பூர்வம் || (15)

Devanatha! All-pervading Lord! Thy Sookti (The Purushasookta) which is read in all the Vedas and greatly favoured by Sage Vedavyasa and others- and which is the premier Sookta, recites that these beautiful angas of Thine have brought into existence this universe starting with Brahma.

Not only do the Angas of the Lord exude exquisite beauty but they are the progenitors of the entire universe beginning with Brahma. It is so laid down in the Purushasookta which is the premier Vedic treatise finding a place in all the (four) Vedas and held in great esteem by great savants and sages like Vyasa.

Note : the extra address to the Lord in this sloka as விபோ! (vibho) in addition to the usual Devanatha நிர்ஜரபதே ! here.(15)

SLOKA 16

देवेश्वरत्वमिह दर्शयितुं क्षमस्ते
नाथ त्वयापि शिरसा विधृतः किरीटः ।
पकीकृत द्यु मणि बिम्बसहस्र दीप्तिः
निर्मूलयन् मनसि मे निबिडं तमिस्रम् ॥ १६ ॥

தேவேவச்ரத்வமிஹ தர்சயிதும் க்ஷமஸ்தே
நாத த்வயாபி சிரஸா வித்ருத கிரீட: ।
ஏகீக்ருத த்யுமணி பிம்ப ஸஹஸ்ர தீப்தி:
நிர்மூலயந் மநஸிமே நிபிடம் தமிஸ்ரம் ॥ (16)

Lord! The Kireeta that is held by (borne on) the head even by Thee, which shines with the effulgence of myriads of discs of the sun assembled together and which totally destroys (dispels) the dense darkness (of ignorance) embedded in my mind, is sufficient (competent) to disclose Thy overlordship over the Devas.

Note : After having sung about the Samudaya Sobha. (totality of effulgence) of the Lord's Vigraha made up of various-angas—each lustrous and lovely—in Sloka 14, and after touching upon the immeasurable greatness of the Angas in projecting this universe, Desika proceeds to enjoy each Anga separately (from this 16th Sloka onwards in 30 Slokas). The enjoyment is from head to foot (கேசாதி பாதபர்யந்தம் and not பாதாதி கேச பர்யந்தம் as in Bhagavad-dhyana Sopanam). The devotee is apt to look at the Lord's feet first and proceed upwards.

Alavandar in his Stotra-ratna enjoys from foot to head, while Koorathalwan in his Varadaraja Stava enjoys Lord Varadaraja's Angas from head to foot. Desika follows Koorattalwan's method here in Devanayaka Panchasat. Appayya Deekshitar in his Varadaraja Stava adopts the other method—foot to head—of enjoying that selfsame Lord.

These apart, an important point to be noted in this connec tion is that in the Paramapada Sopana (Rahasya) Swamy Desik has given to us in exquisite manipravala a very vivid descriptio of the Lord in Vaikunta as enjoyed by the Muktaatma (released soul) when he reaches that celestial Abode of the Lord. There the enjoyment is from Head to foot—or rather from the Kireeta or head ornament (diadem or crown) to the Feet. The words employed and the sentiments voiced there remind us of very many words and sentiments seen here in Devanayaka Panchasat.

In this sloka 16, the Kireeta is enjoyed. It is of such immense greatness that even the Lord wears (bears) it on His head. தலையால் தாங்குகிறான். It is resplendent with the gems set therein each of which defeats the brilliance of the sun's disc and all put together exude the brilliance of a myrid suns. This description is bodily taken from Perialwar Tirumozhi 4-1-1 கதிராயிரமிரவி கலந்தெதிர்த்தாலொத்த நீண்முடியன்.

This effulgence enters into my mind and dispels the deeply imbedded darkness of avidya or ignorance therein.

This Kireeta by itself is competent and sufficient to show to us that He is the Overlord over every one and everything including of course the Devas,

நிகில புவநாதிராஜ்யாதி ஸூசகமான திருவபிஷேகம் (திருவபிஷேகம் Kireeta) vide :- ஆதிராஜ்யமதிகம் புவநாநாம் ஈசதே பிசுநயந் கிலமௌளி: (Alwan's Varadaraja Stava 28) (16)

SLOKA 17

मुग्धस्मितामुत शुभेन मुखेन्दुना ते
संगम्य संसरण संज्वर शान्तये नः ।
सम्पद्यते विबुधनाथ समाधियोग्या
शर्वर्यसौ कुतिल कुन्दल कान्ति रूपा ॥ १७ ॥

முக்தஸ்மிதாம்ருத சுபேந முகேந்துநாதே
ஸம்கம்ய ஸம்ஸரண ஸம்ஜ்வர சாந்தயே ந : |
ஸம்பத்யதே விபுதநாத ஸமாதியோக்யா
சர்வர்யஸௌ குடில குந்தல காந்தி ருபா ॥ (17)

Devanatha! This night in the form of the (dark) lustre of (Thy) curly hair on (Thy) head mingling with the moon that is Thy face rendered lovely by the nectar (moonlight) of Thy sweet smile, becomes a fit object for (our) contemplation and is enough to cure us afflicted by the intense (high) fever of samsara.

The poetic eye of Desika discerns the curly locks of hair on Devanatha's head surrounding the lovely face of the Lord and he sings about it in this sloka as dispelling samsara.

Above the curly locks of hair is the Kireeta enjoyed in the previous sloka as exuding the effulgence of myriads of suns. Below is the lovely moon that is His face. In between there is dense darkness in the form of கருங்குழல் black hair. Only a poet of Desika's emience can indulge in such imagery. He is not unaware of the utter impossibility of such a feature; for we see him attributing it to the அகடிதகடநாஸ்ரமர்த்யம் of the Lord, the capacity to bring about (normally) impossible situations. Bhotathalwar has translated this Sanskrit expression as அரிய தெளிதாகும் ஆற்றல்—(இரண்டாம் திருவந்தாதி 22.)

The night it is that intervenes between the sun and the moon. In this night the moon rises. Then there is the mingling of night and brightness. The lovely face of Devanatha which is going to be enjoyed separately and in full detail from the next Sloka onwards, is the moon; and the captivating smile on that face is the moon light (நிலவு). The two-night and moon-mingle together (ஸங்கம்ய) and drive away heat, referred to here as the high fever (ஸர்ஜ்வர) of samsara. Whatever helps us to dispel samsara, that is worthy of contemplation. This night in the form of the Lord's locks of hair therefore becomes ஸமாதியோக்யா.

I am told that ஸம்ஜ்வர is a technical term in Kamasastra indicating the beloved's extreme taapa or fever caused by the lover's indifference. That abates as the lover appears and enables his beloved to look at his face. At once the fever subsides.

I have not been able to verify this. But I am sure that Desika had mastered Kamasastra (Vatsyayana Sutras etc.) like all other Sastras. That is why and how he is Sarvatantra-Swatantra vide Sloka 3 of Ashtabhijashtaka (போகேம்ருதுப க்ரம தாமபீப்ஸந்.) (17)

SLOKA 18

बिम्बाधरं विकचपङ्कजलोचनं ते
लम्बालकं ललितकुण्डल दर्शनीयम् ।
कान्तं मुखं कनककतककर्णपूरं
स्वातं विभूषयति देवपते मदीयम् ॥ १८ ॥

பிம்பாதரம் விகசபங்கஜலோசநம் தே
ஸம்பாலகம் லலிதகுண்டல தர்சநீயம் |
காந்தம் முகம் கநக கைதக கர்ணபூரம்
ஸ்வாந்தம் வி பூஷயதி தேவபதே மதீயம் ॥ (18)

Devanatha! Thy comely face (attracting like amagnet) with lips red like the bimba fruit (கோவைப் பழம்) eyes which are like the fully blossommed lotus, hanging locks of hair, rendered more lovely by beautiful ear-rings, and with golden Karnapooram (worn on the upper part of the ear) like the flower of the ketaka (தாழை) plant, that face adorns my mind.

The Samudaya Sobha or totality of beauty, which Desika percieves in the face of Lord Devanatha is the subject matter of this Sloka It is a காந்தம் முகம் beautiful face. Kaantam can also be taken to mean a magnet. It attracts and is attractive In the Bhagavad Dhoama Sopanam it is காந்தம் வக்த்ரம்.)

Five beauty points are referred to here. (1) The lovely lips red like கோவைப்பழம். அதர literally means the lower lip) ஓஷ்டம் being the upper lip (e.g)சாருபிம்பதரோஷ்டம் of Bhagavad Dhyana Sopanam). (2) Lotus eyes, lotus in full bloom (விகச) (3) Lambaalaka or locks of hair of the head hanging down the shoulders and acting like a frame to the face. (4) The ear-rings (kundala) which are by themselves lovely லளித and render the face more lovely (தர்சநீய) and (5, the ear ornament known at karnapooram worn on the top of the ear. It is likened to a golden தாழம்பூ the long-petalled flower of the தாழை (Ketaka.)

In the Bhagawad Dhyana Sopana it is said ஸ்வாந்தே காடம் விலகதி about the face, meaning that the face adheres (sticks) to the mind.

In Slokas 21, 22, 24 and 27, the poet enjoys in greater detail the ear, ear-rings, eyes and lips respectively. The alakam (hair) has already been sung about. (18)

SLOKA 19

लब्धा तिथौ क्वचिदियं रजनीकरेण
लक्ष्मीः स्थिरा सुरपते भवतो ललाटे ।
यत्स्वेद विन्दुकणिकोद्गत वुद्वुदान्तः॥
त्र्ययक्षः पुरा स पुरुषोऽजनि शूलपाणिः॥ १९॥

லப்தா திதௌ க்வசிதியம் ரஜநீகரேண
லக்ஷ்மீ: ஸ்த்திரா ஸுரபதே பவதோ லலாடே |
யத்ஸ்வேத பிந்து கணிகோத்கத புத்புதாந்த:
த்ரயக்ஷ: புரா ஸ புருஷோஜநி சூலபாணி: ॥ (19)

In Thy forehead from a bubble that appears in a small part of a sweet drop of which that three-eyed Purusha (Paramasiva) bearing a soola in his hand emerged in times of yore in that face. This splendour (beauty) which is obtained by the moon in a particular thithi (திதி) digit of the moon shines eternally.

The forehead of the Lord which is described thus in the Paramapada Sopana திருக்குழல் சேர்த்தியாலே ஒரு பாகம் இருளோடே சேர்ந்த அஷ்டமீசந்த்ரனை அனுகரிக்கிற திருநெற்றி is enjoyed in this Sloka. The moon on a particular thithi (திதி) in each பக்ஷம் (fortnight) shines with a special beauty—half dark and half bright. That however is only on that thithi. The Lord's forehead however shines with that special beauty always, i. e. permanently. The locks of hair furnish the dark part and the lustrous face the bright part.

Nammalwar in Tiruvoimozhi VII—7 enjoys this forehead —in the 7th verse. These words occur there. நாண்மன்னுவெண் திங்கள் கொல். In the next verse it is referred to as குளிர்வான் பிறை. Desika has evidently been inspired by these verses. வெண் திங்கள் (white moon) can apply only to the அஷ்டமீ சந்த்ரன் as the dark spot (களங்கம்) in the moon will not be visible on ashtami nights. Hence it is குளிர்வான் பிறை cool and great பிறை. Hence this Sloka refers to க்வசித் திதௌ and Lakshmi (effulgence) in regard to அஷ்டமீ சந்த்ரன்.

After referring to ஸ்த்திரா லக்ஷ்மீ the permanent beauty of the face in the first half of the sloka, Desika refers to one feat which underlines the Mahimai (greatness) of that face. Paramasiva who is referred to as the three-eyed one and as wielding the Soola weapon was born out of a bubble that appeared from a drop of sweat on that face (நெற்றி வியர்வை). Long ago (புரா) i. e. at the time of creation. The Sanskrit commentary on this stotra published in Kumbakonam in the year 1910 cites a passage from the Mahopanishad. Many words of the Upanishad have been incorporated in this Sloka. (19)

SLOKA 20

लावण्य वर्षिणि ललाटतटे घनाभे
विभ्रत् तटिद्‌गुणविशेषमिवोर्ध्वपुण्ड्रम् ।
विश्वस्य निर्जरपते तमसावृतस्य
मन्ये विभावयसि माङ्गलिक प्रदीपम् ॥२०॥

லாவண்ய வர்ஷிணி லலாடதடே கநாபே
பிப்ரத் தடித்குண விசேஷமிவோர்த்வபுண்ட்ரம் |
விச்வஸ்ய நிர்ஜரபதே தமஸாவ்ருதஸ்ய
மந்யே விபாவயஸி மாங்களிக ப்ரதீபம் ॥ (20)

Devanatha ! I think that Thou, by wearing an Oordhva Pundram(திருமண் காப்பு) looking like a peculiar streak of lightning in Thy forehead which shines

like a cloud raining beauty, art (really) bringing into existence an auspicious lamp for this world beset (surrounded) by the darkness of ignorance.

The Oordhva pundra shining on the face of Devanatha is the subject matter of this sloka. Pundra is a sectarian mark on the forehead. When it is worn vertically it is known as Oordhva pundra; (if horizontal, it is called tiryak-pundra). Koorathalwan sings in Sloka 26 of Varadaraja Stava that an Oordhva pundra is so called because it shows that devotees of the Lord will be lifted up. He refers only to the Oordhva Pundra tilakam. His son Sri Parasara Bhattar speaks of கஸ்தூரிகலிதோர்த்வபுண்ட்ர திலகம் on the forehead of Lord Sri Ranganatha.

This pundra on Devanatha's face is like a streak of bright lightning emerging from the effulgent cloud-like face of the Lord. The ordinary cloud when it rains gives water. This cloud rains Laavanya (beauty).

By its brightness the pundra dispels the darkness of ignorance shrouding the world. Hence the poet fancies that by wearing the pundra the Lord is really lighting an auspicious lamp (மங்கள தீபம்). (20)

SLOKA 21

आहुः श्रुतिं विबुधनायक तावकीनाम्
आशागण प्रसव हेतुम् अधीतवेदाः ।
आकर्णिते तदियमार्तरवे प्रजानाम्
आशाः प्रसाधयितुम् आदिशति स्वयं त्वाम् ॥२१॥

ஆஹு: ச்ருதிம் விபுதநாயக தாவகீநாம்
ஆசாகண ப்ரஸவஹேதும் அதீத வேதா: |
ஆகர்ணிதே ததியமார்த்தரவே ப்ரஜாநாம்
ஆசா: ப்ரஸாதயிதும் ஆதிசதி ஸ்வயம் த்வாம் ‖ (21)

Devanatha ! Those who have learnt the Vedas say that Thy ear yielded (delivered or brought into existence) the groups of directions (like north, south etc. திக்குகள்). Therefore it is that this ear (of Thine) induces Thee to fulfil the desires of people when their cry of distress is heard by it (the ear).

The topic of this sloka is the ear திருச்செவி of Devanatha. The Vedas have declared that from the ear of the Supreme Lord the several directions(ஆசா:) emerged even as the earth emerged from His feet. Vide பத்ப்யாம் பூமி: திச; ச்ரோத்ராத் (Purusha Sookta). (vide also) கர்ணு: ஆசா: of the Dhyana sloka of Sahasranamam). Therefore there is no wonder that that ear prompts the Lord to fulfil the ஆசா: desires of persons whose cry of distress reaches the ear. There is an obvious pun (slesha) on the word ஆசா:. It means directions, and also desires. In the first half of the sloka the first meaning is intended and the second in the second half. Having brought into existence the ஆசா: is it not the duty of the ear to have those ஆசா: fulfilled? (21)

SLOKA 22

कन्दर्पलाङ्छन तनुस्त्रिदशैकनाथ
कान्ति प्रवाहरुचिरे तव कर्णपाशे ।
पुण्यत्यसौ प्रतिमुख स्थिति दर्शनीया
भूषामयी मकरिका विविधान् विहारान् ॥ २२ ॥

கந்தர்ப்ப லாஞ்சந தநுஸ்த்ரிதசைகநாத
காந்தி ப்ரவாஹ ருசிரே தவ கர்ணபாசே |
புஷ்யத்யஸௌ ப்ரதி முகஸ்திதி தர்சநீயா
பூஷாமயீ மகரிகா விவிதாந் விஹாராந் ॥ (22)

Sole Lord of Devas ! This makara kundala (earring) of Thine, shaped like a fish which is the ensign on the banner of Manmatha (Cupid, the god of love).

beautiful to look at for those who stand in front of Thee, is in the form of an ornament (to Thy ear) and plays several pranks in the midst of the flood of effulgence of Thy ear rendered lovely thereby.

In enjoying the ear-ring that adorns the Lord's ear, Desika indulges in a fine slesha between the ear-ring and a fish. Makaram means a fish. The ear-ring being in the shape of a fish it has acquired the name Makarika. Being an ornament it is Bhooshaamayee makarika.

The fish is the ensign or emblem on the banner of Manmatha who for that reason is known as Makaradhvaja. Being a fish it can live only in water. This fish thrives in the Kaanti-pravaaha or flood of effulgence of the ear. Seeing fish in water is very pleasant. They noiselessly glide hither and thither safely though swiftly. Sometimes they can be seen swimming against the current, a very easy task for them. This can be taken to be one meaning of Prati mukha sthiti. The other meaning is lovely to look to those who stand facing the Lard. (22)

SLOKA 23

नेतुं सरोजवसतिर्निजमाधिराज्यं
नित्यं निशामयति देवपते भ्रुवौ ते।
एवं न चेदखिलजन्तु विमोहनार्हा
किं मातृता भवति काम शरासनस्य॥ २६॥

நேதும் ஸரோஜ வஸதிர் நிஜமா திராஜ்யம்
நித்யம் நிசாமயதி தேவபதே ப்ருவௌ தே |
ஏவம் ந சேதகிலஜந்து விமோஹநார்ஹா
கிம் மா:த்ருகா பவதி காமசராஸநஸ்ய ॥ (23)

Devanatha! That resident in the lotus, Brahma, the creator—ever and anon looks at Thy two eyebrows to properly perform his special function (of creation). Were it not so, which else could have furnished to him the model for (creating) the bow of Manmatha capable of seducing (or tempting) all creatures?

Manmatha figures in this sloka also—a sure indication that Desika's bhakti is slowly getting converted into Sringara பக்தி: ச்ருங்கார வ்ருத்யா பரிணமதி.

Nammalwar in that same Tiruvoimozhi (VI1-7) furnished the cue for the enjoyment of the eyebrows of the Lord in this manner. In verse 4 thereof Alwar asks இன்னுயிர்க்கு ஏழையர் மேல் இணைநீலவிற்கொல் மன்னியசீர் மதனன் கருப்புச்சிலை கொல்? re these eye-brows twin blue bows aimed at the souls of women folk (loving the Lord) ? Or are they the sugar-cane bow of Manmatha?

Swami Desika solves the riddle by postulating that the eyebrows of the Lord have furnished the model to the creator, Brahma, on which he could fashion Manmatha's bow.

Brahma is always looking at the eyebrows of the Lord to know how he is to create objects and beings. He sees approval or disapproval of his plans from the movement of the brows. (Even as the Lord in turn looks at Lakshmi's brows (vide யத்ப்ரூ பங்கா: ப்ரமாணம் Parasara Bhattar in Sriguna Ratna Kosam 4). Thus Brahma knows the eyebrow of the Lord very well So when he came to create the bow to be wielded by Manmatha he fashioned it after the eyebrow of the Lord not only for shape but to enable Manmatha the better to handle it for the purpose of kindling love in the target of that bow, be it man or woman.

It is impossible to demonstrate the seductive attractiveness of the Lord's eyebrows in a more effective way. (23)

SLOKA 24

आलक्ष्य सत्त्वं अतिवेलदयोत्तरङ्गम्
अभ्यर्थिनामभिमत प्रतिपादनार्हम् ।
स्निग्धायतं प्रथिम शालि सुपर्वनाथ !
दुग्धाम्बुधेरनुकरोति विलोचनं ते ॥ २४॥

ஆலக்ஷ்ய ஸத்வம் அதிவேல தயோத்தரங்கம்
அப்யர்த்திநாமபிமத ப்ரதிபாதநார்ஹம் |
ஸ்நிக்தாயதம் ப்ரதிமசாலி ஸுபர்வநாத
துக்தாம்புதேரநுகரோதி விலோசநம் தே ॥ (24)

Devanatha! Thy eye resembles the Ksheerabdhi (milk-ocean) in many respects. Its good nature is well seen; its waves of Daya transgress the shore. It is capable of conferring all desired objects on its votaries. It is lovely long and also broad. The milk ocean has numerous living beings like fish etc. It waves beat against the shore and very often cross it: it yields all desired objects to those who pray for them — like Nectar to Devas, it is also beautiful, long and broad.

The eye of the Lord is enjoyed in this sloka by comparing it with the milk-ocean in slesha style as indicated above.

The reference to அதிவேல தயோத்தரங்கம் must be specially enjoyed. The Lord is கரைபுரண்ட கருணைக்கடல் and that is manifested by the gracious looks of the eyes. To Swami Desika the eyes of the Lord and His Daya are inseparable தயாதரங்காநுசரா: கடாக்ஷா: (Hayagriva Stotram 27) யஸ்ஸகீம்தே சீதோதாராம் ஸ்ரீநிவாஸஸ்யத்ருஷ்டிம் (Daya Satakam 49) தத்வீக்ஷணை: தவ கேளிபத்மை (Daya Satakam 98) அநுகம்பா ஸரித் அம்புஜை: அபாங்கை: (Gopala Vimsati 11) தயாபரிதை அபாங்கை (Dehaleesa stuti 26) The Apangas are being separately enjoyed in the next Sloka.

SLOKA 25

विश्वाभिरक्षण विहार कृतक्षणैस्ते
वैमानिकाधिप विडम्बित मुग्धपद्मैः।
आमोद वाहिभिरनामय वाक्यगर्भैः
आर्द्रीभवाम्यमृत वर्षनिभरपाङ्गैः ॥२५॥

விச்வாபிரக்ஷண விஹார க்ருதக்ஷணைஸ்தே
வைமாநிகாதிப விடம்பித முக்தபத்மை: |
ஆமோத வாஹிபிரநாமய வாக்யகர்பை:
ஆர்த்ரீபவாம்யம்ருத வர்ஷநிபைரபாங்கை: ॥ (25)

Lord of those who move about in Vimanas (air-ships of Devas): I become drenched and cool by Thy looks emanating from (the corner of) Thy eyes, which are desirous of indulging in the sport of protecting the world, which resemble charming lotuses, which bear joy (or perfume) which are pregnant with (unspoken) words enquiring about our welfare, and which are like a shower of nectar.

Even as Desika enjoys the eyes he feels bathed in the cool and gracious glances that issue from those eyes and gives expression to them here. Four qualities of the Katakshas (glances) which rain nectar on him and drench him in that nectar are enjoyed here. (1) Jagat-Rakshana or protection of the worlds is sport in which they always indulge (2) They resemble the lotus in loveliness. (3) They bear (carry) joy or Anandam. (Aamoda can also mean perfume). (4) They appear to welcome us and enquire after our welfare. This they do without words being spoken but well indicated by the glances themselves. In Sloka 26 of Dehaleesa Stuti, Desika sings about that Lord's glances வாசம் விநாபி வதஸீவ மயி ப்ரஸாதம். They talk without words. Vide தூதுசெய் கண்கள் கொண்டு ஒன்று பேசி. Krishna playing on the flute talks with His eyes which carry His messages of love and grace. (திருவாய்மொழி: (9-9-9) (25)

SLOKA 26

नित्योदितैर्निगम निःश्वसितैस्तवैषा
नासा नभश्चरपते नयनाब्धि सेतुः ।
आम्रेडित प्रियतमा मुखपद्म गन्धैः
आश्वासिनी भवति सम्प्रति मुह्यतो मे ॥२६ ॥

நித்யோதிதைர்நிகம நிச்வஸிதைஸ்தவைஷா
நாஸா நபச்சரபதே நயாநாப்தி ஸேதுஃ |
ஆம்ரேடித ப்ரியதமா முகபத்ம கந்தை:
ஆச்வாஸிநீ பவதி ஸம்ப்ரதி முஹ்யதோ மே ॥ (26)

Lord of those who move about in Akhasa or space (i. e. of Devas)! This nose of Thine acting as a Sethu (Bridge or Dam) in the ocean of Thy eye, now refreshes and rejuvenates me in my faint, by its Vedic breaths (மூச்சுக் காற்றுகள்), which emerge eternally therefrom and are reinforced by the fragrance of the lotus-like face of Thy beloved Consort, Lakshmi.

If the eyes of Lord Devanatha, bathed Swami Desika in their nectar-like glances and cooled him, the Lord's nose by its breaths refreshes and rejuvenates him. Desika refers to himself here as முஹ்யத:. One who is in a swoon or faint. Even as a swooned person is restored by gentle fanning, the Lord's breaths are said to restore Desika.

The nose is described as a Sethu or dam laid in mid-sea, the sea here being the Lord's eye. It is the nose that bisects the eye into two. So it is fancied here as a dam or bridge in the middle of the eye. Its location between two seas is itself a refreshing feature.

Added to it is the breath emanating from it. The Lord'g breath is Veda. யஸ்ய நிச்வஸிதம் வேதா: is rendered here as நிகம நிச்வஸிதம். These breaths are நித்யோதிதா: emergins eternally.

The Veda has a fragrance all its own. Desika refers to it as Sruti Parimalam in Bhagavat-Dhyana-Sopana, and as ஆம்நாயகந்தம் in Gopala Vimsati. In addition to that Vedic perfume there is the fragrance of Lakshmi's Mukha-padma-lotus face. That reiterates and reinforces (ஆம்ரேடித) it. Together they revive the devotee's soul which has fainted away due to Samsarataapa.

Samprati - now --Even as Desika is worshipping the Lord he feels he has been revived. (26)

SLOKA 27

आरुण्य पल्लवित यौवन पारिजातम्
आभीर योषिदनुभूतम् अमर्त्यनाथ ।
वंशेन शङ्खपतिना च निषेवितं ते
विम्वाधरं स्पृशति रागवती मतिर्मे ॥२७॥

ஆருண்ய பல்லவித யௌவந பாரிஜாதம்
ஆபீர யோஷிதநுபூதம் அமர்த்யநாத |
வம்சேந சங்கபதிநா ச நிஷேவிதம் தே
பிம்பாதரம் ஸ்ப்ருசதி ராகவதீ மதிர்மே || (27)

Devanatha! My intellect filled with love (passion) touches Thy lip red like the bimba fruit, which is like a young (tender) Parijata with red sprout, which was deliciously enjoyed by the young women-folk of Gokula, and which is (deliciously) enjoyed by the Flute and also by the king of conche :(shankas).

This is the central sloka of the stotra (27th out of 53) and it exudes erotism of an intense type. The nayika bhava (feeling of a lady-love) has fully entered into Desika's mind and he expresses his feeling not as his own but as that of his *mati* or intellect (vide sloka 9 ante where it was धीः also feminine).

This manner of expression is known as தாய்ப்பாசுரம் as contrasted with தலைவிப்பாசுரம் or தோழிப்பாசுரம். These are the three ways of expressing the intense love of a love-lorn lady.

Desika here refers to his mati as touching (kissing) the lovely lips of the Lord. That is the result of her (its) having become a raagavati. Raga means love, passion. It is a passionate kiss on the Lord's lips in which Desika's mati indulges in the excess of its love. Adharam (அதரம்) as already pointed out literally means the lower lip but is very often used to refer to both the lips.

The lips are red like the fruit of the bimba tree (கோவைப் பழம்). The Alwars refer to கோவை and coral (பவளம்) to describe the redness of the lips.

In the lips of the Lord the mati of Desika sees a young and tender Parijata which has just yielded a red sprout, pallavam or துளிர். How it dared to kiss the Lord's lips is explained in the second and third lines of the sloka. Were not these lips enjoyed to their heart's content by the young damsels of Gokula? Why? Even an inanimate object like the flute enjoys these lips. The great Panchajanya also enjoys the sweetness of the lips. In fact Goda-devi who has set the pace for enjoying the Lord the erotic way, had to ask the Panchajanya to learn about the sweetness and fragrance of the Lord's lips. (கருப்பூரம் நாறுமோ, கமலப்பூ நாறுமோ of Nachiar Tirumozhi). That Desika has in mind that Tirumozhi can be seen from the reference to the Panchajanya as சங்கபதி translating Andal's சங்கரையன் (king of Shankas).

Numerous are the devotees who have gone into ecstacy over the flute played by Krishna. Desika himself is one. In his Gopala Vimsati, he sings about Venugopala in several slokas. Sloka 16 thereof extols the flute and sings Pallandu to it. The stotra winds up with a reference to Gopala as a திவ்ய வேணு ரஸிக:.

So, inspired by the examples in the shape of Gopis, the Flute and the Panchajanya, Desika's mati softly touches the lord's lips with Raga (amorous desires). Raga means desire: It also means red. The raga (redness) of the lips of the Lord induces raga (desire) in Desika's mati, and its (her) reaction is described in this sloka.

Readers will remind themselves here of Sloka 18 ante where while describing the lovely face (காந்தம் முகம்) of Devanatha bimbadara figures as the first and foremost feature. The lips are the objects of enjoyment even to the Muktaatma in Paramapada as can be seen from Paramapada Sopanam, Paraapti parva, already referred to. Nammalwar's enjoyment of the lips is கோலந்திரள் பவளத்துண்டம். (27)

SLOKA 28

पद्मालया वलय दत्त सुजात रेखे
त्वत्कान्ति मेचकित शङ्खनिभे मतिर्मे ।
विस्मेर भावरुचिरा वनमालिकेव
कण्टं गुणीभवति देवपते त्वदीये ॥ २८ ॥

பத்மாலயாவலயதத்த ஸுஜாத ரேகே
த்வத்காந்தி மேசகித சங்கநிபே மதிர்மே |
விஸ்மேரபாவ ருசிரா வநமாலிகேவ
கண்டே குணீபவதி தேவபதே த்வதீயே || (28)

Devanatha! My mati (intellect) like (Thy) Vanamaala lovely to look at because of its fully blossomed flowers (or by its—the mati's, feeling of astonishment and wonder) becomes an ornament to Thy neck, with its beautiful *rekhas* (lines) which are the imprints of the bracelet of Lakshmi, who resides in the lotus, which (neck) resembles the Shankam (conch) rendered black by Thy (dark) lustre.

Slowly Desika's eyes descend from the face to the neck of the Lord. The red lips are the last item of the face; it was the first in sloka 18 describing the several features of the entire face (Samudaya). The nayika bhava persists. The mati (lady) who fell in love with the lip now is enchanted by His neck to which she attaches herself.

The neck has rekhas or lines which the poet fancies to be the imprints of, or marks left by, the bracelets in Lakshmi's hand during embrace (vide அநிப்ருத பரிரம்பை: ஆஹிதாம் இந்திராயா: கநகவலய முத்ராம் கண்டபாகே ததாந: Varadaraja Panchasat 47).

The neck is often compared to the shanka (conch.) Here, however, it is compared to a black conch. The conch by its nature is white but here it is rendered dark by the blue effulgence of the Lord.

In the Paramapada Sopanam, Paraapti Parva, the neck is enjoyed thus: நாச்சிமாருடைய வளைத்தழும்போடு வாசியில்லாத ரேகாத்ரயத்தை யுடைத்தாய், திருமேனியொளியாலே பசுத்த ஸ்ரீ பாஞ்சசந்யம்போல் இருக்கிற திருக்கழுத்து.

To such a neck my intellect has attached itself as an ornament like the Vanamaalai (வனமாலை) which is the garland on the Lord's neck flowing down to the knees.

ஆஜாநுலம்பிநீமாலா ஸர்வர்து குஸுமோஜ்வலா |
மத்யேஸ்தூலகதம்பாட்யா வநமாலேதிகீர்த்திதா ||

The flowers in the garland are of various hues and tints (sloka 33 post), all of them fully blossomed and hence beautiful. Vismerabhaava ruchiraa may also be taken to qualify the mati, in which case, it will give the meaning, beautiful because of the feeling of wonder and astonishment on her (mati's) face causde by the charm of the neck.

Gunee bhavati means becomes an ornament. She (my mati) becomes another ornament to the neck, like the Vanamaala.

The mati which just touched the lovely lip of the Lord in the previous sloka has now become an ornament to His neck. (28)

SLOKA 29

आजानुलम्बिभिरलङ्कृत हेतिजालैः
ज्याघात राजि रुचिरैर्जित पारिजातैः ।
चित्राङ्गदैस्त्रिदशपुङ्गव जातसङ्गा
त्वद्बाहुभिर्मम दृढं परिरभ्यते धीः ॥ २९ ॥

ஆஜாநுலம்பிபிரலங்க்ருத ஹேதிஜாலை:
ஜ்யாகாத ராஜிருசிரைர்ஜிதபாரிஜாதை: |
சித்ராங்கதைஸ்த்ரிதசபுங்கவ ஜாதஸங்கா
த்வத்பாஹுபிர் மம த்ருடம் பரிரப்யதே தீ: ॥ (29)

Devanatha! By Thy arms which reach (hang down upto) the knees, which (lend lustre to and) beautify the groups of weapons (held in those arms) which are rendered lovely by the signs of bruises caused by handling the bow-string, which have defeated the Parijata tree (in the matter of conferring boons) which have bright armlets set with multi-coloured gems - my intellect deeply attached (to Thee) gets folded in a close embrace.

The Lord reciprocates the deep love evinced by Desika's intellect towards Him so far, especially in slokas 9, 27 and 28 by folding her to His bosom in a close embrace. The arms which so embraced her are sung about in this sloka.

The arms are long, hanging down to the knees - a Lakshana (indication) of His Purushothamatvam, (Supreme Godhood). Hanuman, when he first set his eyes on Rama and Lakshmana exclaims ஆயதாச்ச, ஸுவ்ருதாச்சபாஹவ: ம்பரிகோபமா: long, lovely in their roundness and also sturdy.

Next the arms are enjoyed as bestowing beauty on the weapons, Panchayudhas, they are holding. This point was referred to earlier in sloka 14.

Then there are marks left on those arms by the bowstring of His bow (Saarngam). They add to the beauty of the arms, incidentally indicating His prowess also. In the Bhagavad-Dhyana-Sopana also the ஜ்யாகிணாங்கா is referred to in sloka 11 dealing with the Utsavamurty of Lord Ranganatha.

The fourth feature of the arms is their bounteousness. Tirumangai Alwar sings of அலம்புரிந்த நெடுந்தடக்கை (The long and sturdy hands that give and give so lavishly that the receiver cries out "'enough, enough; போதும் போதும்). The lavishness is here referred as "having conquered the Parijata tree which is famous for giving whatever is asked for".

Next the angadas (தோள்வளைகள்), ornaments for the upper arm capture the fancy of the intellect धीः They are chitra, charming with the various-coloured gems set in them.

No wonder the intellect becomes jaata-sanga, fondly attached. No wonder either in such an intellect being held by those arms in a close embrace.

The sentiment expressed in Paramapada Sopana about the arms is well worth being set down here "ஏதேனுமொரு கிஞ்சித்காரம் பண்ணினார்க்கு ஸர்வஸ்வபூதமான காடபரிஷ்வங்கத்தைக் கொடுக்கடவனவான திருத்தோள்கள்—reminding us of the tight embrace of Hanuman by Sri Rama, exclaiming ஏஷ ஸர்வஸ்வ பூதோ மே. This is my all. (29)

SLOKA 30

नीलाचलोदित निशाकर भास्कराभे
श्रान्ताहिते सुरपते तव शङ्खचक्रे ।
पाणेरमुष्य भजतामभयप्रदस्य
प्रत्यायनं जगति भावयतः स्वभूम्ना ॥ ३० ॥

நீலாசலோதித நிசாகர பாஸ்கராபே
சாந்தாஹிதே ஸுரபதே தவ சங்க சக்ரே |
பாணேரமுஷ்ய பஜதாமபய ப்ரதஸ்ய
ப்ரத்யாயநம் ஜகதி பாவயத: ஸ்வபூம்நா ॥ (30)

Devanatha! Thy Shanka and Chakra shining with the effulgence of the moon and the sun (simultaneously) rising from a blue hill, which have vanquished foes, inspire by their greatness and power, confidence in the minds of devotees about the abhayam (freedom from fear) granted by this (right) hand (of Thine).

Desika enjoys here the Shanka and Chakra which are held respectively by the uplifted left and right hands of the Lord. The Shanka (conch) shines with its white and cool brightness like the moon; the Chakra (disc) in the right hand sheds the effulgence of myriads of suns (பாஸ்கர கோடி துல்யம்); in between is the Tirumeni of the Lord resembling a hill of blue sapphire. Here is an abhoota-upama (impossible analogy). The sun and the moon can never rise together from the udaya giri at one and the same time. But here they do.

This fine analogy is bodily taken from Nammalwar's Tiruvoimozhi 8-2-10 நேமியும் சங்கும் இருகைக் கொண்டு, பன்னெடுஞ் சூழ்சுடர் ஞாயிற்றோடு பால்மதியேந்தி ஓர் கோல நீல நன்னெடுங் குன்றம்.

These two weapons are next said to have subdued foes. That bespeaks their strength and prowess.

Together, the two of them strengthen the belief of devotees and inspire confidence into their minds about the unfailing efficacy of the Abhayam (fearlessness) promised by the right hand held in Abhayamudra. That Abhaya Mudra is going to be enjoyed in the very next sloka. (30)

SLOKA 31

अक्षोभणीय करुणांवुधि विदुमाभं
भक्तानुरञ्जनम् अमर्त्यपते त्वदीयम् ।
नित्यापराध चकिते हृदये मदीये
दत्ताभयं स्फुरति दक्षिण पाणिपद्मम् ॥ ३१ ॥

அக்ஷோபணீய கருணாம்புதி வித்ருமாபம்
பக்தாநுரஞ்சநம் அமர்த்யபதே த்வதீயம் |
நித்யாபராதசகிதே ஹ்ருதயே மதீயே
தத்தாபயம் ஸ்புரதி தக்ஷிணபாணிபத்மம் ॥ (31)

Devanatha! Thy lotus-like right hand looking like a coral in the imperturable sea of Thy Karuna, which ever gladdens (Thy) devotees, shines in my heart which is trembling with fear because of its eternally sinning propensity, conferring Abhayam, freedom from fear.

The abhaya-hasta, the abhayam promised by which, is assured by the Shanka and Chakra, looks like a coral (பவளம்) to Desika. Corals are found only in seas. This coral is seen in the Karuna-sagara that the Lord is. Though the Lord is of the colour of the clouds his palm is always red. Hence it is enjoyed as being like coral.

(*Note*: In abhayamudra the palm of the right hand is held with fingers upwards. In Vara-daana mudra the fingers point downwards).

It is the abhaya-hasta that ever and anon is pleasing to, and gladdens, the minds of devotees who worship Him, for it is only this hand poised in abhayamudra that says மாசுச: Do not grieve. Grief and fear go together in the sinner's heart. பய சோகங்களில் ஒன்றைச் சொல்லில் இரண்டும் சித்திக்கும் says Desika in Srimad Rahasyatrayasara, Charama slokadhikara. My Acharya used to say that we must concentrate on the feet of the Lord till prapatti, and that after becoming prapannas, we must always remember the Abhaya Hastam that invariably conveys to us the certainty of protection.

It is this sentiment that is voiced in the second half of the sloka. "I am eternally committing sins and therefore get afraid. One look at the Abhaya-hasta conveys consolation. It is as if it says ஸர்வ பாபேப்யோ மோக்ஷயிஷ்யாமி. Chakita means trembling with fear, நித்யாபராத சகிதே eternal sinning: vide Sri Bhashyakara referring to க்ருதாந், க்ரியமாணாந் கரிஷ்யமாணாம் apacharas, sins already committed that are being committed and that are going to be committed. Even to us aghast at such sins, the Abhayahasta brings consolation (31)

SLOKA 32

दुर्दान्तदैत्य विशिख क्षत पत्रभङ्गं
वीरस्य ते विबुधनायक बाहुमध्यम् ।
श्रीवत्स कौस्तुभ रमावनमालिकाङ्कं
चिन्ताऽनुभूय लभते चरितार्थतां नः ॥ ३२ ॥

துர்தாந்த தைத்ய விசிக க்ஷத பத்ரபங்கம்
வீரஸ்ய தே விபுதநாயக பாஹுமத்யம் |
ஸ்ரீவத்ஸ கௌஸ்துப ரமா வநமாலிகாங்கம்
சிந்தாऽநுபூய லபதே சரிதார்த்ததாம் ந: ॥ (32)

Devanatha! Our thought enjoying the chest of Thee who art a warrior, which has fine figures painted on it in the shape of arrow-marks caused by the darts of wicked asuras and which is ornamented (adorned) by the mole Srivatsa, the gem Kaustubha, Lakshmi, and Vanamala, obtains the feeling of having attained its object.

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Bhuja-madhyam or chest, between the arms, is giving Desika the feeling that he has attained the object of his desire. Its enjoyment fills his thought with ecstacy. He is so pleased in fact that he refers to his thought as ந: சிந்தா, our thought (honorific).

The chest, it is first said, is adorned so to say by the bruises left behind by the darts of wicked asuras while He was fighting with them. Patrabhangam means ' drawing lines or figures on the face and person with fragrant and coloured substances such as musk, saffron, or sandal juice, yellow pigment etc., as a mark of decoration". Apte. It is also called Patra-rekha. In Tamil it is known as தொய்யில்.

The marks left on the chest of the Lord by the arrows of asuras appear to Desika as a decoration bespeaking at the same time His valour in vanquishing foes unmindful of the injuries they may inflict on Him. That is why He is referred to a Veera.

Patrabhangam apart, there are four other features that act as ankas or chinnas, marks (அடையாளங்கள்) and/or ornaments. (Anka also means an ornament-bhoosha) They are (1) Srivatsa (2) Kaustubha (3) Ramaa and (4) Vanamalika.

Srivatsa is the mark or mole (மச்சம் or மறு). on the Lord's chest. It symbolises Moola Prakriti, one of the 25 tattwas. the first among them.

Kaustubha is a unique precious gem that came out of Ksheerabdhi when it was churned by Devas and asuras with the help of the Lord. காசினியில் மணியனைத்தும் காயாவண்ணன் கடைந்தெடுத்த கௌத்துவத்தின் சீர்மைக் கொவ்வா is the tribute paid by Desika to this gem among gems. It symbolises the individual soul the 25th Tattwa. புருடன் மணி வரமாக.

Ramaa is Lakshmi who ever resides in the Lord's chest அகலகில்லேன் இறையுமென்று அலர்மேல் மங்கையுறை மார்பா is how Nammalwar addresses Lord Srinivasa (Tiruvoimozhi 6-10-10)

Vanamalika is the garland already touched upon in sloka 28 and is going to be enjoyed separately and more fully in the very next sloka (33).

The pleasing blend of several colours in the abovementioned four items should be enjoyed. Srivatsa is of dark hue; Kaustuba bright red; Ramaa Yellow like molten gold, தப்தஜாம்பூநதாபா (Sri Stuti Sloka 11). Vanamala is by itself a blend of several pleasing colours inclusive of these three.

Enjoying the several lovely features of the Lord's chest, my thought has obtained a feeling of fulfilment of its desires and aspirations.

The sixth sloka of Bhagavad-Dhyana-sopanam which enjoys Lord Ranganatha's chest also refers to all these. There ஸந்தாப சமநம் is realised while here it is சரிதார்த்ததை.

Tiruppanalwar in Amalanadipiran (verse 5) attributes the Lord entering into him, not to any tapas on his part, but to the Lord's chest. அரங்கத்தம்மான் திருவாரமார்பதன்றோ அடியேனை ஆட்கொண்டதே. It has enslaved me. (32)

SLOKA 33

वर्णक्रमेण विबुधेश विचित्रिताङ्गी
स्मेरप्रसून सुभगा वनमालिकेयम् ।
हृद्या सुगन्धिरजहत्कमला मणीन्द्रा
नित्या तव स्फुरति मूर्तिरिव द्वितीया ॥ ३३ ॥

வர்ணக்ரமேண விபுதேச விசித்ரிதாங்கீ
ஸ்மேரப்ரஸூந ஸுபகா வநமாலிகேயம் |
ஹ்ருத்யா ஸுகந்திரஜஹத்கமலாமணீந்த்ரா
நித்யா தவ ஸ்புரதி மூர்த்திரிவ த்விதீயா || (33)

Devanatha! This Vanamalika shines like a duplicate of Thy Moorti (Vigraha: Tiruṃeni) because of (1) possessing lovely Angas (parts of various and varied varnas (colours-castes) (2) charming to look at because of fully blossomed flowers (lovely smile) (3) *hridya* worn on the chest (pleasing) (4) full of good fragrance (5) inspearable from Lakshmi and Kaustubha and (6) Eternal.

The Vanamala is equated to the Vigraha (Tirumeni) of the Lord by slesha. Six points of resemblance are set down. (1) The Vanamala has variegated flowers as its components and there is a pleasing order in the arrangement of those colours.

The Lord's Tirumeni is made up of angas which gave birth to the several castes. Face-Brahmins; Hands-Kshatriyas; Thigh Vaisays; Feet-Sudras.

Varnam also means colour. The Lard's Tirumeni is white like milk in Kritya yuga, yellow like gold in Treta yuga, red like a gem in Dwapara yuga, and dark blue like the clouds in Kali yuga. The Alwars have sung about this order of colours பால், பொன், பசுப்பு கார்வண்ணம் Tirumalisai Alwar (Nannmugan Trivandadi; Tirumangai Alwar பாலின் வண்ணம், பொன்னின் வண்ணம்; மணியின் வண்ணம் and கொண்டல் வண்ணம்.

(2) The Vanamaala is beautiful because of the fully blossomed flowers in it.

The Lord is beautiful with His charming smile.

(3) Both are hridya, the Vanamala because it is worn on the chest next to the heart. The Lord's Tirumeni is always pleasing and dear to the heart.

(4) The Vanamala is fragrant because it has fragrant flowers in its composition. The Lord is all-fragrant ஸர்வகந்த: ஸர்வரஸ::

(5) The Vanamala being on the chest of the Lord is always associated with Lakshmi and Kaustubha.

The Lord's Tirumeni is always in close touch with Lakshmi and the Kaustubha gem.

(6) The Vanamala is eternal. It symbolises and stands for the Pancha tanmaatras and the five bhootas. Earth, water fire, air and akhasa. இநபூதமாலா வனமாலையாக. Thus it stands for 10 out of the 25 tattwas.

Of course, the Lord's Tirumeni is also eternal. (33)

SLOKA 34

आर्द्रं तमोमथनम् आश्रिततारकं ते
शुद्धं मनः सुमनसाममृतं दुहानम् ।
तत् तादृशं विबुधनाथ समृद्धकामं
सर्गेष्विदं भवति चन्द्रमसां प्रसूतिः ॥ ३४ ॥

ஆர்த்ரம் தமோமதநம் ஆச்ரிததாரகம் தே
சுத்தம் மந: ஸுமநஸாமம்ருதம் துஹாநம் |
தத் தாத்ருசம் விபுதநாத ஸம்ருத்தகாமம்
ஸர்கேஷ்விதம் பவதி சந்த்ரமஸாம் ப்ரஸூதி: || (34)

Devanatha ! This unique mind of Thine, because of (1) its wetness (2) its capacity to do away with darkness (3) its capacity to uplift votaries (surrounded by stars) (4) its purity (whiteness) (5) its propensity to confer Moksha on right minded persons (giving nectar to Devas) (6) its having all desires fulfilled (fostering Kama) becomes capable of begetting (creating) moons during creation.

"Out of Lord's mind emerged the Moon சந்த்ரமாமநஸோஜாத: (Purusha Sookta). So the characteristics of the moon must be the same as, or at least similar to, the characteristics of His mind. This identity or similarity between the mind and the moon (the material and the object made out of that material) is established here. Slesha is the method by which it is achieved, as in the previous sloka.

(1) Both are *aardram*,wet and cool. The Lord is so because of His Karuna. The moon is therefore cool.

(2) Tamomathanam Dispeller of Tamas. The Lord dispels ignorance from the heart of His devotees. The moon dispels the darkness of the night.

(3) ஆச்ரித தாரகம்: The Lord uplifts those who rely on Him. The moon is surrounded by stars.

(4) Suddham, The Lord is pure and holy. The moon is white and bright.

(5) If the Lord confers Moksha (அம்ருதம்) on right minded persons (ஸுமநஸ:) who surrender themselves to Him, the Moon sheds nectar (அம்ருதம்) on Devas (ஸுமநஸ:)

(6) The Lord's mind has no unfulfilled desire, because the Lord himself is an அவாப்த ஸமஸ்த காம:—one with all desires realised. The moon induces Kama or love in men and women and hence it is also ஸம்ருத்த காமம்.

Based on these the Lord's mind can well be said to be the material cause (உபாதான காரணம்) for the moon, every time creation (ச்ருஷ்டி) takes place. (34)

SLOKA 35

विश्वं निगीर्य विबुधेश्वर जातकार्श्यं
मध्यं वलित्रय विभाव्य जगद्विभागम् ।
आमोदि नाभिनलिनस्थ विरिञ्च भृङ्गम्
आकल्पयत्युदरबन्ध इवाशयो मे ॥ ३५ ॥

விச்வம் நிகீர்ய விபுதேச்வர ஜாதகார்ச்யம்
மத்யம் வலித்ரய விபாவ்ய ஜகத்விபாகம் |
ஆமோதி நாபி நலிநஸ்த்த விரிஞ்ச ப்ருங்கம்
ஆகல்பயத்யுதரபந்த இவாசயோ மே ‖ (35)

Devanatha ! My mind decorates Thy hip (abdomen) like a waist band ஒட்டியாணம், the hip which remains lean and thin (notwithstanting Thy) having swallowed all the worlds, which by its three folds (மடிப்புகள்) seems to indicate the division (demarcates) the three worlds (Swarga, Madhya and Paataala), which has a bee in the form of Brahma in its fragrant navel-lotus.

அரங்கத்தம்மான திருவயிற்றுதர பந்தம் என்னுள்ளத்தில் நின்று வாகின்றதே was the reaction of Tiruppanalwar during his enjoyment of Lord Ranganatha's Tirumeni. The waist-band Mekala or ஒட்டியானம் pleasantly strolls within my mind. But Desika's mind girdles the abdomen of Lord Devanatha, becoming a waist-band itself.

The stomach (belly) of the Lord is enjoyed in the sloka. Having swallowed all the worlds one would expect it would be big and protruding. On the other hand it is very small and lean (க்ருசம்).

It has three wrinkles or folds (மடிப்புகள்). It looks as if the three worlds are each in a separate compartment, and the division betweeu them is indicated by the three folds.

Then there is the navel lotus (உந்திக்கமலம்) which begot Brahma. Brahma who is always humming the Vedas appears to be a bee on that fragrant lotus.

Deiika's mind encircles this part of the Lord's Tirumeni like a waist band or belt.

SLOKA 36

नाकौकसां प्रथमतामधिकुर्वंते ते
नाभीसरोज रजसां परिणाम भेदाः ।
आराधयद्विरिह तैर्भंवतः समीची
वीरोचिता विबुधनायक इत्यभिख्या ॥ ३६ ॥

நாகௌகஸாம் ப்ரதமதாமதிகுர்வந்தே தே
நாபீ ஸரோஜ ரஜஸாம் பரிணாம பேதா: |
ஆராதயத்பிரிஹ தைர்பவத: ஸமீசீ
வீரோசிதா விபுதநாயக இத்யபிக்யா ॥ (36)

Herioic Lord ! The various forms assumed by the pollen dusts of Thy navel lotus obtain a first rank among the denizens of Swarga loka (Devas). Because of these Devas worshipping (Thee) in this place, the praiseworthy name Devanatha is quite appropriate (to Thee).

The Pollen dusts of the Navel-lotus of the Lord. which are responsible for creation விச்வாயமாந ரஜஸாகமலேந நாபௌ (Goda Stuti), vary in their content and potentiality. The objects created therefore vary. Due to this parinama-bheda, one (Indra) attains the position of being the chief of the Devas; the rest are mere Devas. All the Devas worship you here. Hence, the name Devanatha is very ptoper and apprepriate to you.

In sloka 12 ante it was said that the Lord got the name Devanatha because of his capacity to confer the state and status of Devas on those who worship Him in this sthala. Here the same name is attributed to His being worshipped by Devas.

This sloka is in praise of the Navel (உந்தி; கொப்பூழ்) of the Lord. (36)

SLOKA 37

पीतांबरेण परिवारवती सुजाता
दास्ये निवेशयति देवपते दृशौ मे ।
विन्यस्त सव्यकरसङ्गम जायमान-
रोमाञ्च रम्य किरणा रशना त्वदीया ॥ ३७ ॥

பீதாம்பரேண பரிவாரவதீ ஸுஜாதா
தாஸ்யே நிவேசயதி தேவபதே த்ருசௌ மே |
விந்யஸ்த ஸவ்யகரஸங்கம ஜாயமாந
ரோமாஞ்ச ரம்யகிரணா ரசநா த்வதீயா || (37)

Devanatha ! Thy waist-ornament (belt) enslaves my eyes, the belt that is surrounded on all sides by Thy Peetambaram, that is well made, that has its hairs on end due to contact with Thy left hand placed on (touching) Thy thigh and thereby shooting out lovely rays.

In the 35th sloka Desika sang that his mind surrounded the Lord's waist like a mekala or Belt அரைநாண்மாலை; அரைஞாண் similar to ஒட்டியாணம் worn by ladies. In this sloka Desika enjoys the Belt worn by the Lord Himself. The Peethambara worn by the Lord surrounds the Belt on all sides, above and below. The Belt has been made carefully and well to suit the Lord's waist, neither too tight nor too loose. The gems set on that Belt let out bright rays. To the poetic eyes of Desika it looks as if it has got into a state of horripilation (hairs standing on end புளகாங்கிதம்: மயிர்ச்சிலிப்பு). The cause for that is that the left hand of the Lord touches it. Of the four hands of Lord Devanatha, two, one right and one left are uplifted and hold the Chakra and Shanka respectively. The other right hand with the Abhaya Mudra is also above the waist. Only the other left hand hangs below the waist clasping the thigh. This is known as Katihastam. The contact with this hand is what thrills the Belt and makes it horripilate.

Such a Rasana (Belt) arrests the eyes of Desika and hold, it captive, and makes a slave of them. In Tiruppanalwar's case, the Belt strolls pleasantly in his mind உள்ளத்தில் நின்றுலாகின்றதே while it was the chest that enslaved the Alwar. (வாரமாக்கி—வாரம் = குடிவாரம்).

This sloka No. 37 gives another meaning by slesha. A young damsel of high birth dressed in a golden sari like the pitambara, gets into a state of புளகருசிரே (Gopala Vimsati, by the mere touch of her lover and captivates my eyes.

SLOKA 38

स्त्रीरत्न कारणम् उपात्ततृतीय वर्णं
दैत्येन्द्र वीरशयनं दयितोपधानम् ।
देवेश यौवनगजेन्द्र कराभिरामम्
ऊरीकरोति भवदूरुयुगं मनो मे ॥ ३८ ।

[redacted]

ஸ்த்ரீரத்ந காரணம் உபாத்த த்ருதீயவர்ணம்
தைத்யேந்த்ர வீரசயநம் தயிதோபதாநம் |
தேவேச யௌவந கஜேந்த்ர கராபிராமம்
ஊரீகரோதி பவதூருயுகம் மநோ மே ॥ (38)

Devanatha ! Thy twin thighs admit (entice) my mind; the thighs that brought into existence a gem among women Oorvasi (ஊர்வசி) that created the third caste (Vaisya) , that are the final resting place for the asura chieftains, that act as a pillow to (Thy) Consorts, and that are as pleasing and lovely as the trunk of the elephant King that is youthfulness.

Desika's mind now enjoys the thighs of the Lord. They are so lovely that the mind is admitted into them i.e. gets enticed and entrapped.

Five excellences of the thighs are pointed out (1) These are the thighs that produced (brought into existence) the celebrated beauty of Devaloka namely Oorvasi (ஊர்வசி). Her very name shows her origin (ஊரு = தொடை). This is found in the Puranas.

(2) The third of the four casts, Vaisya originated from the thighs. ஊருததஸ்யத்வைச்ய: (Purushasookta).

(3) Very many Asuras like Madhu, Kaitabha, Hiranya found their final resting place 'Veerasayanam' on the thighs of the Lord.

(4) They act as soft pillows to the Lord's Consorts. கமலா பூமி நீளோபதாநம், Bhagavat-dhyananasopanam. (4).

(5) They are very charming to look at like the trunk (துதிக்கை) of an elephant. The Lord is a நித்ய யௌவன ஸ்வபாவன். That eternal youthfulness is pictured here as a Gajendra elephant or chief and the thighs are compared to the trunk of such an elephant.

Such twin thighs have captured my mind. (38)

SLOKA 39

लावण्यपूरललितोर्ध्वं परिभ्रमाभं
लक्ष्मीविहार मणिदर्पण बद्धसख्यम् ।
गोपाङ्गणेषु कृतचङ्क्रमणं तवैतत्
जानुद्वयं सुरपते न जहाति चित्तम् ॥ ३९ ॥

லாவண்யபூரலலிதோர்த்வ பரிப்ரமாபம்
லக்ஷ்மீ விஹார மணிதர்ப்பண பத்தஸக்யம் |
கோபாங்கணேஷு க்ருதசங்க்ரமணம் தவைதத்
ஜாநுத்வயம் ஸுரபதே நஜஹாதி சித்தம் ॥ (39)

Devanatha ! These twin knees of Thine, which have the effulgence of the lovely upsurging whirlpools in the flood of (Thy) beauty, which have close friendship with the sportful jewelled mirror of Lakshmi, which playfully roams about the courtyards in the house of Gopas (cow-herd folks),-those knees will not leave my mind.

If the thighs attracted Desika's mind, the knees of the Lord have (forcibly) entered into that mind and will not leave it. That is the extent of the charm of the knees.

The shinning knees look to be the uprising whirlpools in the flood water of loveliness (Laavanya). The knees again are so spotless and clean and shining that they look like the bejewelled mirrors in Lakshmi's Antahpuram (அந்த:புரம்).

Are not these knees the knees of Baby Krishna who crawled (தவழ்தல்) in the courtyards of Nandagopa's mansion ?

No wonder they cling to my mind and will not leave it. (39)

SLOKA 40

दूत्ये दुकूलहरणे व्रजसुन्दरीणां
दैत्यानुधावनविधावपि लब्धसाह्यम् ।
कन्दर्पकाहल निषङ्कलाचिकाभं
जङ्घायुगं जयति देवपते त्वदीयम् ॥ ४० ॥

தூத்யே துகூலஹரணே வ்ரஜஸுந்தரீணாம்
தைத்யாநுதாவந விதாவபி லப்தஸாஹ்யம் |
கந்தர்ப்பகாஹல நிஷங்க கலாசிகாபம்
ஜங்காயுகம் ஜயதி தேவபதே த்வதீயம் ॥ (40)

Devanatha ! Thy twin shanks (Part of the leg from the knees down to the ankle) which were of great use to Thee in going as a messenger (of the Pandavas), in taking away the garments of the lovely damsels of Gokula, and in following the asuras taking to their heels, and which are bright like the Kaahala (a musical instrument, எக்காளம்) quiver (case for arrows), and Kalaachi (காளாஞ்சி) a vessel to receive water, especially the water that is offered to the Lord by way of அர்க்கய, பாத்ய, ஆசமநீய etc. படிகம்) of Manmatha, shine glorious and victorious.

Next to the knees, the shanks of the Lord attract Desika's eyes and he sings Pallandu to them.

He reminds himself of three of its numerous exploits. When there was need for some one to go as an emissary from the Pandavas to the Kauravas, these shanks came to the help of the Pandavas. They have a taste for the task. யத்நாத்ய ப்ரஸங்க ப்ரியம் (Bhattar) தருமனிரந்தது இசைந்து சென்றன (நவமணிமாலை.)

Then again when as Gopala the Lord stole the garments of the Gopis who had left them on the bank of the River Yamuna, these shanks alone helped Him to ascend the Kurunda (குருந்த) tree and seat Himself on a branch of that tree with all those clothes.

Thirdly, these shanks were of great help to the Lord when asuras began to flee from Him. It was these shanks that led Kalayavana to his destiny.

The endearing, nay, tempting aspects of those shanks also strike Desika's eye. Three items in Cupid's (Manmatha's) repertoire come to the Poet's mind as his eye is rivetted on the shanks. (1) The musical instrument he plays on probably to announce his arrival. (2) The quiver or அம்பருத்தூணி or அம்புக்கூடு of cupid in which he stocks his arrows (which are flowers) to be aimed at his victims and (3) cupid's Kalachi or Kaulanji a receptacle and vessel usually with a wide mouth to receive water. Vide மெய்ப்படிக்கமானது பொன் வெற்பு—மும்மணிக் கோவை.

These attractive aspects make Desika sing ஜயதி-long may they live !

SLOKA 41

पाषाण निर्मित तपोधन धर्मदारं
भस्मन्युपाहित नरेन्द्रकुमारभावम् ।
संवाहितं त्रिदशनाथ रमामहीभ्यां
सामान्य दवतमुशन्ति पदं त्वदीयम् ॥ ४१ ॥

பாஷாண நிர்மித தபோதந த்ர்மதாரம்
பஸ்மந்யுபாஹித நரேந்த்ர குமாரபாவம் |
ஸம்வாஹிதம் த்ரிதசநாத ரமாமஹீப்யாம்
ஸாமாந்யதைவதமுசந்தி பதம் த்வதீயம் || (41)

Devanatha ! Thy padam (foot) brought into existence the dharmapatni of a sage from out of a stone. Ash was converted into a Prince by the touch of that foot. That selfsame foot is fondly and softly caressed by Lakshmi and Bhoomi Devi. (No wonder) the wise ones say that Thy foot is common godhead (Deity).

The Feet of the Lord are here demonstrated to be common to all. Though only the singular padam finds a place in the sloka, we have to understand the sloka as referring to both the feet of the Lord. Peyalwar's பொது நின்ற பொன்னங்கழல் (88) figures here as ஸாமாந்ய தைவதம். The Jitante Stotram has this as its 2nd sloka தேவாநாம் தாநவாநாம் ச ஸாமாந்ய மதிதைவதம் | ஸர்வதா சரண த்வந்த்வம் வ்ரஜாமி சரணம் தவ ||.

A stone and an ash-heap on the one side, Lakrhmi Devi and Bhoodevi on the other. The Lord's feet are common to one and all. Ahalya was cursed by her husband, Sage Gautama, to become a stone for a lapse in her chastity. A touch of Sri Rama's feet restored her to her former form. கோதமன் தன் பன்னிக்கு முன்னையுருக் கொடுத்தது இவன் போது நின்றதெனப் பொலிந்த பொலன்கழற்கால் பொடி கண்டாய்-says Sage Viswamitra to King Janaka (the last verse of குலமுறை கிளர்த்து படலம் in the Balakanda of Kamba Ramayanam).

The apaandavaastra that Aswathama sent at the end of the Mahabharata war had scorched the foetus in the womb of Abhimanyu's wife into ashes. Lord Krishna touched the ashes கரிக் கட்டை that fell from the womb with His Feet and it became Parikshit. விழுகரியோர் குமரனென மேவிச் சிறந்தன ......பெரிய பெருமான் மென்பதங்களே (அதிகார ஸங்கிரஹம்).

Having referred to stone and ash-most trivial things-and the effect of the touch of the Lord's feet on them in the first two lines of the sloka, Desika refers to two of the greatest. Lakshmi and Bhoomi, who are next only to the Lord, and Their caressing His Feet. லக்ஷ்மீ பூம்யோ: கர ஸரஸிஜை: லாலிதம் ரங்கபர்த்து:, பாதாம்போஜம் (Bhagavad Dhyana Sopanam-2) Lotuses caressing a lotus.

No wonder therefore that the knowing ones say that those feet are the common deity to one and all. (41)

SLOKA 42

आवर्जिताभिरनुषज्य निजांशुजालैः
देवेश दिव्यपदपद्म दलायिताभिः ।
अन्याभिलाष परिलोलमिदं मदीयम्
अङ्गीकृतं हृदयमङ्गुलिभिः स्वयं ते ॥ ४२ ॥

ஆவர்ஜிதாபிரநுஷஜ்ய நிஜாம்சுஜாலை :
தேவேச திவ்யபதபத்ம தலாயிதாபி |
அந்யாபிலாஷ பரிலோலமிதம் மதீயம்
அங்கீக்ருதம் ஹ்ருதயமங்குலிபி : ஸ்வயம் தே ॥ (42)

Devanatha ! This mind of mine wants to wander hither and thither due to desire for things (except Thee) has now been arrested and of their own accord taken over by Thy Feet’s fingers (toes) slightly bent together by their own lustre-clusters and looking like petals of Thy divine lotus feet.

The toes of the Lord’s Feet now arrest Desika’s attention and by their own volition take over (and) appropriate) his mind. Anguli means finger. (In English the fingers of the feet are referred as toes and not fingers).

This mind of mine has been aimlessly wandering everywhere due to its pursuit after worldy pleasures but not pleasures that you alone can bestow. Even such a mind has been entrapped by your toes which appear to be slightly bent because of their own lustre. If the Lord’s foot is a lotus, the toes there of are its petals. (42)

SLOKA 43

पङ्कान्यसौ मम निहन्ति महस्तरङ्गैः
गङ्गाधिकां विदधती गरुडस्रवन्तीम् ।
नाकौकसां मणिकिरीट गणैरुपास्या
नाथ त्वदीय पदयोर्नख रत्न पंक्तिः ॥ ४३ ॥

பங்காந்யஸௌ மம நிஹந்தி மஹஸ்தரங்கை :
கங்காதிகாம் விதததீ கருடஸ்ரவந்தீம் |
நாகௌகஸாம் மணிகிரீடகணைருபாஸ்யா
நாத த்வதீயபதயோர்நகரத்நபங்க்தி : ॥ (43)

Lord! This series of gems in the shape of the nails of Thy feet which makes the Garuda–nadi (கருடநதி) superior to the Ganga, and which is respectfully worshipped by the groups of gem-set diadems of Devas, dispels my quagmires (sins) by its plentiful waves (of effulgence).

The nails (நகங்கள்) of the toes of the Lord's feet are very bright and shining. " The river nearyby known as Garudanadi always flows under these nails. This river therefore surpasses the Ganga in merit, because the Ganga can claim contact with those nails only at the moment of its origin.

The Devas came and prostrate before Lord Devanatha as enjoyed in the opening sloka of this stotra. ப்ரணதஸுரகிரீட பராந்த மந்தாரமாலா விகளித மகரந்த ஸ்நிக்த பாதார விந்த: The honey flowing from the garlands on their diadems was enjoyed there. Here the gems set on these diadems are referred to and it is said that those gems pay respectful homage to and worship this series of gems in the shape of the nails on the toes of the Lord's feet. (*Ratnasaamanya Paddhati* of Srimad Paduka Sahasram lavishly enjoys the gems on the Paduka in a similar strain).

The series of gem-like nails redeems us from the slough of our sins by drying it up. (43)

SLOKA 44

वज्र ध्वजाङ्कुश सुधा कलशातपत्र-
कल्पद्रुमाम्बुरुह तोरण शङ्खचक्रैः ।
मत्स्यादिभिश्च विबुधेश्वर मण्डितं ते
मान्यं पदं भवतु मौलिविभूषणं नः ॥ ४४ ॥

வஜ்ர த்வஜாங்குச ஸுதா கலசாதபத்ர
கல்பத்ருமாம்புருஹ தோரண சங்க சக்ரை : |
மத்ஸ்யாதிபிச்ச விபுதேச்வர மண்டிதம் தே
மாந்யம் பதம் பவதுமௌலி விபூஷணம் ந : ॥ (44)

Devanatha ! May Thy revered and honoured Foot adorned by Rekhas (marks) sepresenting (1) Vajra (வஜ்ராயுதம்) (2) Flag (கொடி) (3) The goad (அங்குசம்; மாவட்டி) (4) vessel of nectar (அம்ருத கலசம்) (5) Umbrella (6) the Kalpaka tree (7) The lotus (8) a festoon (தோரணம்) (9) the Shanka (10) the Chakra (11) fish (மகரம்; மீன்) and the like; may such a foot become an ornament to our heads !

Perialwar as Yasoda while enjoying the toddling (தளர் நடை) of child Krishna notices that His feet leave imprints of Shanka and Chakra on the floor. " ஒரு காலில் சங்கு ஒரு காலில் சக்கரம், உள்ளடி பொறித்தமைந்த இரு காலுங் கொண்டு அங்கங்கு எழுதினாற் போல் இலச்சினைபட நடந்து"

(உள்ளடி=sole of the foot. இலச்சினை=mark. Imprint= அடையாளம்)

Alavandar in his Stotraratna sloka 31 mentions five more in addition to Shanka and Chakra. சங்க. ரதாங்க, கல்பக, த்வஜ, அரவிந்த, அங்குச வஜ்ரலாஞ்சநம். To those seven, Desika adds four more ஸுதாகலசம், ஆதபத்ரம் (குடை) தோரணம் and மத்ஸ்யம். Not satisfied with the eleven, he adds ஆதிபி and others.

As already said, though the singular பதம் is used. the reference obviously is to both Feet. தளிர்புரையும் திருவடி என் தலை மேலவே (திரு நெடுந்தாண்டகம் திருவடி is singular but மேலவே is plural.) வேதமௌளி குரு prays for a மௌளி விபூஷணம் in the shape of the Lord's feet not only for himself but for his followers also. ந: எங்களுக்கு. (44)

SLOKA 45

चित्रं त्वदीय पदपद्म पराग योगाद्
योगं विनापि युगपद्विलयं प्रयान्ति ।
विष्वञ्चि निर्जरपते शिरसि प्रजानां
वेधः स्वहस्त लिखितानि दुरक्षराणि ॥ ४५ ॥

சித்ரம் த்வதீயபதபத்ம பராக யோகாத்
யோகம் விநாபி யுகபத்விலயம் ப்ரயாந்தி |
விஷ்வஞ்சி நிர்ஜரபதே சிரஸி ப்ரஜாநாம்
வேத: ஸ்வஹஸ்த லிகிதாநி துரக்ஷராணி || (45)

Devanatha ! The widely different bad letters written by Brahma with his own hand on the heads of people get destroyed at one and the same time by contact with the (sacred) dust of Thy lotus foot even without the performance of (Ashtanga) Yoga. What a wonder !

While commenting on sloka 41 ante we reminded ourselves of a verse of Kamban which says that Ahalya was restored to her former self and purified by contact with a particle of dust (பொடி) of Rama's feet. That பொடி or துகள் or dust of the Lord's feet திருவடித்துகள் can itself work wonders. This sloka points to that fact.

At the time of birth i. e. when each being is sent into the world, Brahma, the creator writes with his own hand letters on that being's head according to his or her karma. These are popularly referred to as தலையெழுத்து or விதி. The clever and fortunate ones take to righteous path and ultimately by adopting Ashtanga Yoga (Bhakti Yoga) obtain the Grace of Lord who wipes out those bad letters. (We all know that).

But those wise people who receive on their heads the Lord's திருவடித்துகள் the pollen dust of the lotus that is the Lord's foot, have their dark destiny evidenced by the bad letters on their heads wiped out in a trice. The dust particles settle on the bad letters and in the process the letters get wiped out. This great achievement without doing the prescribed yoga throws the poet into a state of wonder, and he exclaims சித்ரம் even at the beginning.

One must enjoy the sabdachitram யோகம் விநாபி—பதபத்ம பராக யோகாத். This contact with the Paraagas is itself a yogam (joining), though it may not be Bhaktiyogam.

In Sloka 20 of Hayagreeva Stotra a very similar sentiment has been expressed. விலிப்த மூர்த்தந்ய லிபிக்ரமாணாம் த்வதங்க்ரி ராஜீவ ரஜ:கணாநாம்.

What has been left unsaid but remains in these two slokas, i. e. the bad letters get substituted by good letters, is said in sloka 50 of Srimad Paduka Sahasram (Sloka 20 of Prabhava Paddhati). "பரிஸர விநதநாம் மூர்த்நி துர்வர்ண பங்க்திம், பரிணமயஸி சௌரே: பாதுகே! த்வம் ஸுவர்ணம்" வர்ணம் means letter. துர்வர்ணம் is bad letters. ஸுவர்ணம் is good letters. துர்வர்ணம் also means silver and ஸுவர்ணம் gold. Silver converted into gold. What alchemy this! (45)

SLOKA 46

ये जन्मकोटिभिरुपार्जित शुद्धधर्माः
तेषां भवच्चरण भक्तिरतीव भोग्या ।
त्वज्जीवितैस्त्रिदशनायक दुर्लभैस्तैः
आत्मानमप्यकथयः स्वयमात्मवन्तम् ॥ ४६ ॥

யே ஜந்மகோடிபிருபார்ஜித சுத்த தர்மா :
தேஷாம் பவச்சரண பக்திரதீவபோக்யா |
த்வஜ்ஜீவிதைஸ்த்ரிதச நாயக துர்லபைஸ்தை :
ஆத்மாநமப்யகதய : ஸ்வயமாத்மவந்தம் || (46)

Devanatha ! To those who are possessed of pure dharmas (means for attaining moksha) earned through crores of lives, it is extremely sweet (and easy) to have Bhakti towards Thy Feet. Hast Thou not said of Thine own accord that such persons who regard Thee as their very life are very rare, and in fact they are Thy inner soul !

The அங்க ப்ரத்யங்க அநுபவம் (anga by anga enjoyment) of Lord Devanatha's Tirumen started in sloka 16 and ended with the previous sloka, Desika now refers to the means (உபாயம்) for eternally enjoying such a beautiful person by getting rid of Samsara (cycle of birth and re-birth) by attaining Moksha and reaching Paramapadam (Vaikuntam). The means according to Visishtadvaitha Siddhanta are two. Bhakthi Yoga and Prapathi Yoga. This sloka deals with the fortunate few who take to. Bhaktiyoga and the next sloka with Prapatti yoga nishtas.

This sloka begins by referring to a pre-requisite for adopting or taking to Bhakti Yoga, the amassing of pure and unsullied Dharma (நிவ்ருத்தி மார்க்கம்). In the course of myriads of earlier lives (ஜந்மகோடி). Dharmam has been defined by Desika as அபிமத ஸாதனம் (that which can secure the desired object).

To such persons having such immense dharma to their credit. Bhakti towards the Lord is very sweet and attractive. So they take to Bhakti not minding its arduous and lengthy course. The Lord has designated such persons by the name Gnani in the Gita. To them the Lord is everything.

வாஸுதேவஸ்ஸர்வம—"உண்ணும் சோறு, பருகுநீர்,
தின்னும்வெற்றிலையும் எல்லாம் கண்ணன்" —திருவாய்மொழி (6-1-7)

To the Lord Himself such persons are rare to find ஸமஹாத்மா ஸுதுர்லப: (Gita). The Lord therefore when He finds one such Gnani, He hails Him as His antaratma. ஜ்ஞாநீது ஆத்மைவ மே மதம் (Gita). (46)

SLOKA 47

निष्किंचनत्व धनिना विबुधेश येन
न्यस्तः स्वरक्षण भरस्तव पादपद्मे ।
नानाविध प्रथित योगविशेष धन्याः
नार्हन्ति तस्य शतकोटि तमांश कक्ष्याम् ॥ ४७ ॥

நிஷ்கிஞ்சநத்வ தநிநா விபுதேச யேந
ந்யஸ்த : ஸ்வரக்ஷண பரஸ்தவ பாதபத்மே |
நாநாவித ப்ரதித யோகவிசேஷ தந்யா :
நார்ஹந்தி தஸ்ய சதகோடி தமாம்சகக்ஷ்யாம் ॥ (47)

Devanatha ! The fortunate ones who have taken to Bhaktiyoga which is the object of various kinds of praise, are not (however) fit to obtain even (a small fraction) one by hundred crores of a person who has the wealth of his having nothing (utterly destitute) and by whom the burden of his protection has been placed at Thy feet (by Saranagati or Prapatti.)

This Sloka shows Desika's great regard for, and partiality towards, Prapatti yoga. No wonder. His avatara was mainly, if not only, for establishing Prapatti as at once a Sastric and scientific system available to one and all, irrespective of caste, creed, colour or sex, to attain moksha-an immediate and straight means for Moksha. That is why he is hailed as Prapadana-kalaa-janma-jaladhihi, and as தஞ்சப் பரகதியைத் தந்தருள்வோன்.

The sloka starts with referring to a Prapatti-Yoga-nishta as a wealthy person (dhani). What is his wealth ? நிஷ்கிஞ்சநத்வம்-having nothing at all, dire poverty in regard to the necessary qualifications (for Bhakti Yoga) such as Gnana and Sakti. A man may be a millionaire but if he has no Gnana and Sakti, then he is an akinchana and thereby qualified to take to Prapatti. This aakinchanyam is a sine quo non for Prapatti. It confers the requisite adhikara (qualification) on the Prapitsu one who wants to resort to prapatti and become a prapanna. Hence it is his ' Wealth".

One who having this feeling of worthlessness, resorts to Prapatti which the Sloka itself says consists in placing the burden of his protection at the Lord's Feet, is by far superior to those fortunate few who have to their credit various and varied and also famous attainments enabling them to take to Bhakti Yoga. For they lack that supreme faith (Mahaviswasa) in the Lord's Grace which alone can secure final beatitude. This Mahaviswasa is the primary and fundamental aspect of Prapatti. It is one of the angas (component part) in the performance of Prapatti. (47)

SLOKA 48

आत्मापहार रसिकेन मयैव दत्तम्
अन्यैरधार्यमधुना विवुधैकनाथ ।
स्वीकृत्य धारयितुमर्हसि मां त्वदीयं
चोरोपनीत निज नपुरवत् स्वपादे ॥ ४८ ॥

ஆத்மாபஹார ரஸிகேந மயைவ தத்தம்
அந்யைரதார்யமதுநா விபுதைகநாத |
ஸ்வீக்ருத்ய தாரயிதுமர்ஹஸி மாம் த்வதீயம்
சோரோபநீத நிஜ நூபுரவத் ஸ்வபாதே ॥ (48)

Sole Lord of Devas! I had till now great taste in appropriating my soul (unto myself). Now I myself, of my own accord, offer myself to Thee, realising that I cannot be saved or protected by others. Pray accept one as if I were Thy anklet returned by a thief who had stolen it, Thou alone art fit and competent to wear it.

Swami Desika offers himself (ஆத்ம ஸமர்ப்பணம்) to Lord Devanatha. This is the essence of Prapatti.

We all are prone to think that we belong to ourselves. Only, great souls like Nammalwar can realise the truth.

யானே யென்னை யறியகிலாதே
யானே யென்றனதே யென்றிருந்தேன்
யானே நீ என்னுடைமையும் நீயே
வானே யேத்துமெம் வானவரேறே (திருவாய் 2—9—9)

Desika sings in Mummanikkovai:—7

யானு நீயே என்னுளுறைதலின்
எனதும் நீயே உனதன்றியின்மையின்

When this realisation dawns on us by Acharya Kataksha we feel aghast that for ages on ages we have considered as ours what is really His. We begin to feel that we have committed theft of His property. As we have been enjoying His property, the sloka refers to ஆத்மாபஹார ராஸிக்யம் a taste and flair in pilfering and thieving.

At once we rush to Him, lay down our souls at His feet, very much like a thief who stole the King's anklet (வீரக்கழல், கால் சிலம்பு) and finding that he can neither use it nor market it comes to the king and offers it to him saying you alone are fit to wear this. No one else is fit to use it (அந்யைநதார்யம்). Like that thief, we come back to the Lord saying "This aatma which I have been regarding as mine is in truth and fact yours only. Neither myself nor any other can claim any right to it. I have now restored it to the rightful owner who alone is fit to wear it. "தானும் பிறரும் தனக்குத் தஞ்சமன்று."

Swami Desika has depicted Prapatti as a marriage of the individual soul to the Paramaatma (sloka 30 of Saranagati Deepika). Here he pictures it as the offering of an ornament to the Lord. These several descriptions are intended to dispel the fear felt by several ignorant people that Prapatti is connected with death. It is a marriage with the Lord.

Though the individual soul is precious to the Lord like the Kaustubha gem on his chest (புருடன் மணிவரமாக) we ought not to feel that way, but in all humility we must offer ourselves at His feet. This is indicated by the word ஸ்வபாதே and the analogy of Noopura, a foot-ornament. (48)

SLOKA 49

अज्ञान वारिधिमपाय धुरन्धरं माम्
आज्ञा विभंजनम् अकिञ्चन सार्वभौमम् ।
विन्दन् भवान् विवुधनाथ समस्तवेदी
किं नाम पात्रमपरं मनुते कृपायाः ॥ ४९ ॥

அஜ்ஞானவாரிதிமபாய துரந்தரம் மாம்
ஆஜ்ஞாவிபஞ்ஜநம் அகிஞ்சந ஸார்வபௌமம் |
விந்தந் பவாந் விபுதநாத ஸமஸ்தவேதீ
கிம் நாம பாத்ரமபரம் மநுதே க்ருதாயா: || (49)

Devanatha ! Having got me, who is an ocean of ignorance, a chief among sinners, one prone to transgress Thy commands, and who is an emperor among worthless people, why dost Thou, who art omniscient, (all knowing), look elsewhere for another receptacle for Thy Grace?

Aakinchinyam or worthlessness is not only a requisite qualification for Prapatti but is one of its five angas (component parts.) The Prapatti must be performed by an akinchana with aakinchinya anusandanam (ஆகிஞ்சிந்யாநு ஸந்தானம்) i.e. setting forth his helpless state நின்னருளாம் கதியன்றி மற்றொன்றில்லேன். This sloka is conceived in that way. I am an ocean of agnana (ignorance). I am chief among sinners. I always disobey your commands, Shastraic injunctions. I never do what I should do. I seduously do what I am prohibited from doing. "அக்ருத்யாநாம் ச கரணம் க்ருத்யாநாம் வர்ஜநம் ச மே" Nyasa Ḍaskam—9. Thus I have been and I am transgressing your commands. I am an emperor among akinchanas.

These disqualifications amply qualify me for being the recipient of Thy Daya. That being so, why do you look elsewhere for a fit receptacle for your Grace ? No one can compete with me in lowliness. I am in fact an அபராத சக்ரவர்த்தி. By capturing me you would be netting a capital catch, as you cannot get a more fit person for being protected. All else have only limited faults to their credit மயிதிஷ்டதி துஷ்க்ருதாம் ப்ரதாநே, மிததோஷாந் இதராந் விசிந்வதீ த்வம் (Daya Satakam—39). (49)

SLOKA 50

प्रह्लाद गोकुल गजेन्द्र परिक्षिदाद्याः
त्रातास्त्वया ननु विपत्तिषु तादृशीषु ।
सर्वं तदेकमपरं मम रक्षणं ते
सन्तोलयतां त्रिदशनायक किं गरीयः ॥ ५० ॥

ப்ரஹ்லாத கோகுல கஜேந்த்ர பரிக்ஷிதாத்யா:
த்ராதாஸ்த்வயா நநு விபத்திஷு தாத்ருசீஷு |
ஸர்வம் தததேகமபரம் மம ரக்ஷணம் தே
ஸந்தோல்யதாம் திரிதசநாயக கிம் கரீய: ॥ (50)

Devanatha ! Prahlada, the race of cows of Gokula, the Elephant-King, Pareekshit and others like them have been protected by Thee from immense and unspeakable dangers, is it not ? All that on one side. On the other side, my protection. Please weigh in a balance. Which is heavier ?

Desika presses the point made in the previous sloka further and requests the Lord to weigh in a balance the protection afforded by Him to (1) Prahlada when his father tortured him in various ways (2) the race of cows (in Gokulam) when it was threatened with extinction by an irate Indra who tried to wash he cows away by torrential rain (3) Gajendra who was saved from the crocodile's mouth and (4) Parikshit who even while in his mother's womb had been burnt to ashes by Aswathama's apaandavastra, and such other instances on one side(தட்டு)of the balance and "my" (Desika's) obtaining protection on the other; which is heavier you can see for yourself. Undoubtedly the scale on which "my" protection is placed will go down showing it is heavier, is the implication of the question. (50)

SLOKA 51

वात्याशतैर्विषय रागतया विवृत्तैः
व्याघूर्णमान मनसं विबुधाधिराज ।
नित्योपतप्त इति मां निजकर्म घर्मैः
निर्वेशय स्वपदपद्म मधु प्रवाहम् ॥ ५१ ॥

வாத்யாசதைர் விஷயராகதயா விவ்ருத்தை:
வ்யாகூர்ணமாந மநஸம் விபுதாதிராஜ |
நித்யோபதப்த இதி மாம் நிஜகர்ம கர்மை:
நிர்வேசய ஸ்வபதபத்ம மது ப்ரவாஹம் ॥ (51)

Overlord of the Devas ! My mind is always whirling round and round due to the whirl-wind of enveloping world-pleasures. I am daily (always) scorched by the heat of my own karmas. Pray make me enjoy the flood of honey exuding from Thy Lotus Feet.

Desika prays in this sloka for succour from tempest and heat. I am tosed hither and thither by the sense-pleasures which have taken the form of a hurricane. My mind is scorched with my own karmas. Please deign to immerse me in the flood of honey issuing from your lotus feet. (தவாம்ருதஸ்யந்தி நிபாதபங்கஜே Stotra Ratnam 27). In your lotus feet exuding necter let me find, what has eluded me all along, beautitude and bliss.

With this fervent prayer for succour from age long distress, Desika winds up the Stotra. The two slokas that follows are a Pallandu to Lord Devanatha, and a mudra sloka. (51)

SLOKA 52

जय विबुधपते त्वं दर्शिताभीष्टदानः
सह सरसिज वासामेदिनीभ्यां वशाभ्याम् ।
नलवनमिव मृद्गन् पापराशिं नतानां
गरुडसरिदनूपे गन्धहस्तीव दीव्यन् ॥ ५२ ॥

ஜய விபுதபதே த்வம் தர்சிதாபீஷ்டதாந:
ஸஹ ஸரஸிஜவாஸா மேதிநீப்யாம் வசாப்யாம் |
நலவநமிவ ம்ருத்நந் பாபராசிம் நதாநாம்
கருடஸரிதநூபே கந்த ஹஸ்தீவ தீவ்யந் ॥ (52)

Devanatha ! Shining like a (majestic) elephant in rut accompained by two female elephants, Lakshmi and Bhoodevi, on the bank of the river Garuda nadi, manifesting Thy quality of conferring all desired fruits (to Thy votaries), and crushing the heaps of sins of Thy devotees as an elephant does a forest of reeds (or lotuses) by trampling on it, may Thou live victorious and glorious for long long years. (பல்லாண்டு பல்லாண்டு).

Starting the tora with a prayer for his own safety, Swami Desika winds it up with a prayer for the Lord's safety. It has also to be noted that in the first as well as the fifty-first sloka it is the Tiruvadi (feet) of the Lord is looked up to for protection.

In this Mangalaa saasana sloka (52) the Lord is pictured as a majestic elephant in rut (மதயானை) pouring mada-jalam and accompained by two female elephants Lakshmi Devi and Bhoomi Devi, the two Naachimars ever with the Lord, one on each side, பிடியிரண்டொடு களபமொன்று பிணைந்த பேரழகு is brought before our mental eyes. Even as the elephant is seen giving out மதஜலம் the Lord is seen giving out all desired fruits (அபீஷ்ட). At the same time, the Lord tramples upon and crushes the sins of His devotees even as the elephant in its wild state tramples upon a forest of lotuses. This elephant-Devanatha-roams on the bank of Garuda-nadi.

May such a Lord ஜயதி shine glorious and victorious for all time. (52)

SLOKA 53

निरवधिगुणजातं नित्य निर्दोषमाद्यं
नरकमथन दक्षं नाकिनामेकनाथम् ।
विनतविषय सत्यं वेङ्कटेशः कविस्त्वां
स्तुति पदमधिगच्छन् शोभते सत्यवादी ॥ ५३ ॥

நிரவதிகுணஜாதம் நித்ய நிர்தோஷமாத்யம்
நரகமதநதக்ஷம் நாகிநாமேகநாதம் |
விநதவிஷய ஸத்யம் வேங்கடேச: கவிஸ்த்வாம்
ஸ்துதிபதமதிகச்சந் சோபதே ஸத்யவாதீ ॥ (53)

Poet Venkatesa, having Thee as the subject matter of praise-Thee who art possessed of limitless (auspicious) attributes, always (eternally) free from blemish (of any sort), the first and foremost, clever at destroying hell (naraka) for (Thy Devotees) who art the sole Lord of the Devas, and who art true in respect of Thy devotees,—shines truthful (one who speaks truly).

The Lord is full of all (endless) auspicious attributes (கல்யாண குணங்கள்). And He is totally bereft of any evil trait. This twin greatness, i.e. Kalyanagunaakaratva and Heyapratyaneekatva, is referred to as ubhayalinga—or the twin marks of the Supreme God, He is the first and foremost one. In regard to His devotees. He destroys naraka (hell). He is an adept at dispelling their sins and thereby sees to it that there is no naraka for them. Then again, to the Devas He is the only Lord and Master. Finally, He is true to His followers.

மெய்யர்க்கே மெய்யனாகும் (திருமாலை) [redacted]

He never belies them. That is why Tirumangai Alwar gave this Emberuman the name அடியவர்க்கு மெய்யன்; which is literally translated into விநத விஷய ஸத்யம். [redacted]

[redacted]

Venkatesa Kavi has sung this stotra in praise of such a Lord. No praise about Him can be anything but true. It is only when we praise others our words become பச்சைப் [redacted] war says in Tiruvoimozhi 3-9-7. In the Lord's case alone praise is true praise. அவிதத விஷயத்வாத் ஸ்துதிவியம் அநவத்யா (Daya-Satakam (105). Therefore the poet who sings in praise of the Lord shines as a Satyavadi. The Lord is Pranata-satyavaadi and Desika the poet in His praise is a Kavi-satyavaadi. (53)

கவிதார்க்கிகஸிம்ஹாய கல்யாணகுண சாலிநே |
ஸ்ரீமதே வேங்கடேசாய வேதாந்த குரவே நம: ||

All glory to Lord Devanatha !

All glory to Swami Desika !